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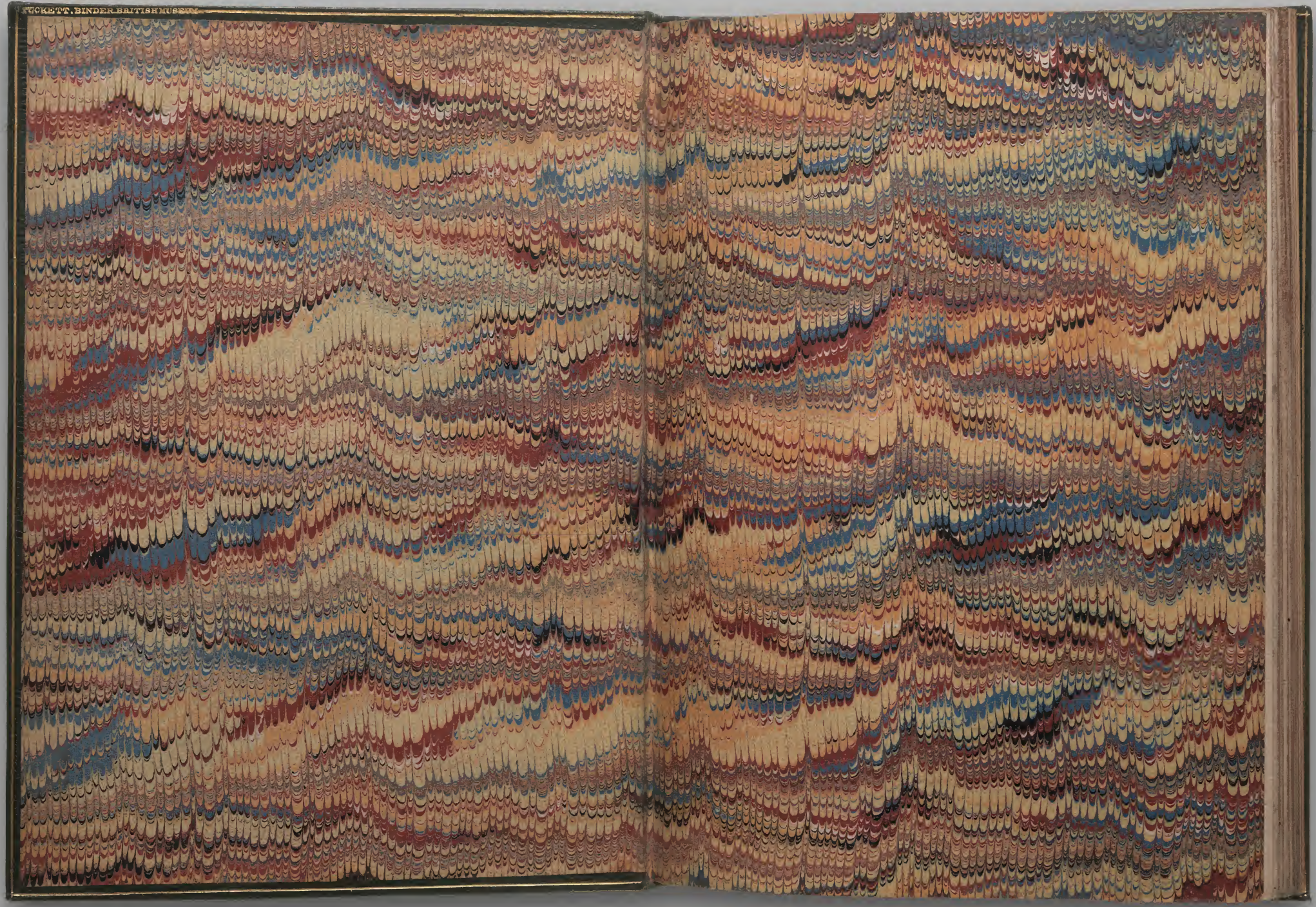

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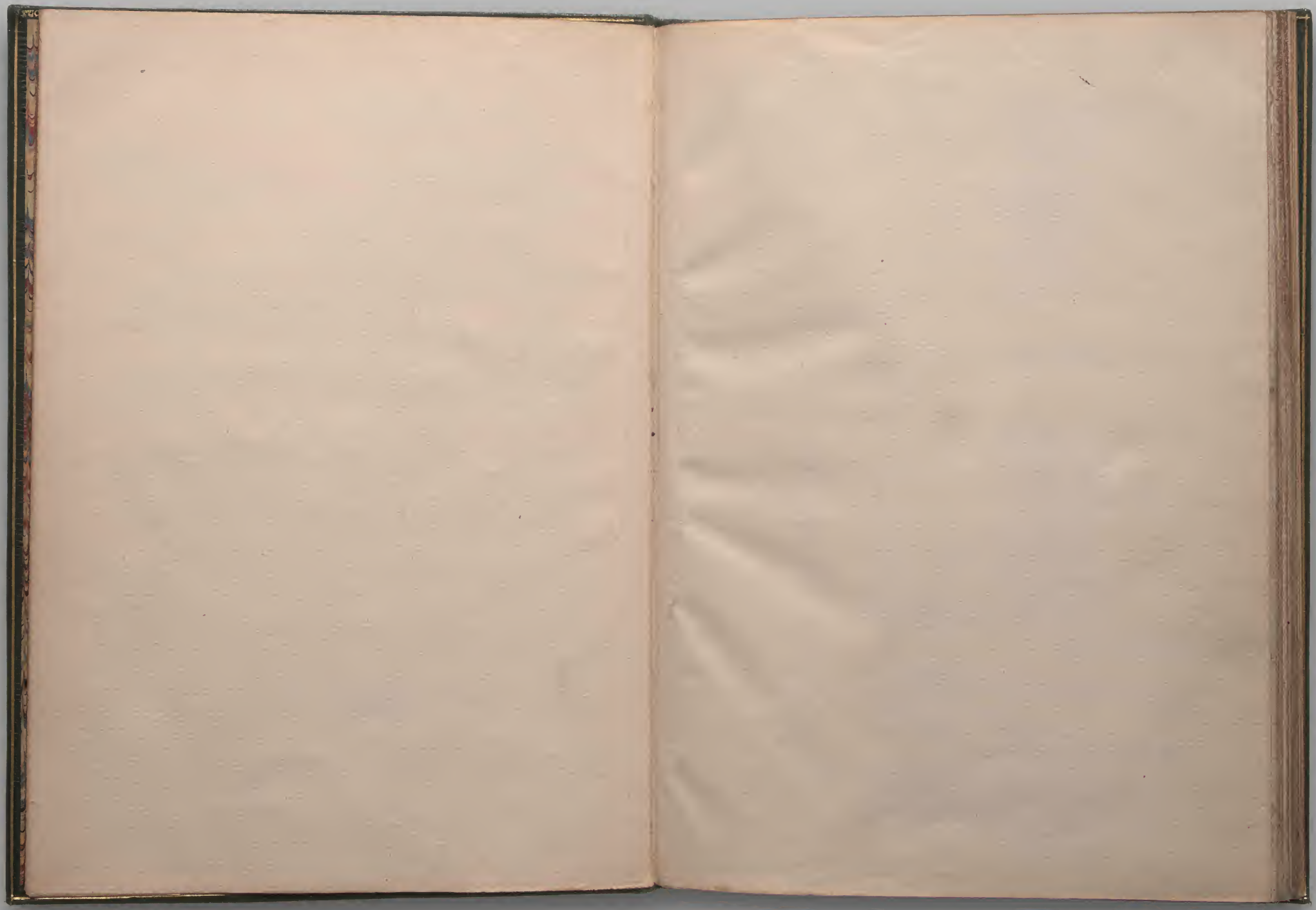

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K. Shakespeare (W.)

C.34.k.31

C. 34. e. 16

Much adoe about Nothing.

As it hath been ſundrie times publikely
acted by the right honourable, the Lord
Chamberlaine his ſeruants.

Written by William Shakeſpeare.

LONDON
Printed by V.S. for Andrew Wiſe, and
William Aſpley.
1600.

Much adoe about *Nothing.*

Enter Leonato gouernour of Messina, Innogen his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his neece, with a messenger.

Leonato.

I Learne in this letter, that don Peter of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

Mess. He is very neare by this, he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leona. How many gentlemen haue you lost in this action?

Mess. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leona. A victory is twice it selfe, when the atchiuer brings home full numbers: I find here, that don Peter hath bestowed much honour on a yong Florentine called Claudio.

Mess. Much deserued on his part, and equally remembred by don Pedro, he hath borne himselfe beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion, he hath indeed better bettred expectation then you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leo. He hath an vncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Mess. I haue already deliuered him letters, and there appeares much ioy in him, euen so much, that ioy could not shew it selfe modest enough, without a badge of bitternesse.

Leo. Did he breake out into teares?

Mess. In great measure.

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Leo. A kind ouerflow of kindneſſe, there are no faces truer then thoſe that are ſo waſht, how much better is it to weepe at ioy, then to ioy at weeping?

Beatr. I pray you, is Signior Mountanto returnd from the warres or no?

Meſſen. I know none of that name, ladie, there was none ſuch in the army of any ſort.

Leonato What is he that you aske for neece?

Hero My coſen meanes Signior Benedicke of Padua.

Meſſ. O hee's returnd, and as pleaſant as euer he was.

Bea. He ſet vp his bills here in Meſſina, and challengde Cupid at the Flight, and my vncles foole reading the chalenge ſubſcribde for Cupid, and challengde him at the Burbolt: I pray you, how many hath he kild and eaten in theſe warres? but how many hath he kild? for indeede I promiſed to eate all of his killing.

Leo. Faith neece you taxe Signior Benedicke too much, but heele be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Meſſ. He hath done good ſeruice lady in theſe warres.

Beat. You had muſty vittaile, and he hath holpe to eate it, he is a very valiaunt trencher man, he hath an excellent ſtomacke.

Meſſ. And a good ſouldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good ſouldiour to a Lady, but what is he to a Lord?

Meſſ. A lord to a lord, a man to a man, ſtufft with al honorable vertues.

Beat. It is ſo indeed, he is no leſſe then a ſtuft man, but for the ſtuffing wel, we are al mortall.

Leo. You muſt not, ſir, miſtake my neece, there is a kind of merry warre betwixt Signior Benedicke and her, they neuer meet but there's a skirmiſh of wit betweene them.

Beat. Alas he gets nothing by that, in our laſt conflict, 4 of his fiue wits went halting off, and now is the whole man gouernd with one, ſo that if he haue wit enough to keep himſelf warm, let him beare it for a difference between himſelf and his horſe, for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reaſonable

ble creature. who is his companion now? he hath euery month a new ſworne brother.

Meſſ. Iſt poſſible?

Beat. Very eaſily poſſible, he weares his faith but as the faſhion of his hat, it euer changes with the next blocke.

Meſſ. I ſee lady the gentleman is not in your bookes.

Beat. No, and he were, I would burne my ſtudy, but I pray you who is his companion? is there no yong ſquarer now that will make a voyage with him to the diuell?

Meſſ. He is moſt in the companie of the right noble Claudio.

Beat. O Lord, he will hang vpon him like a diſeaſe, hee is ſooner caught than the peſtilence, and the taker runs preſently madde, God help the noble Claudio, if he haue caught the Benedict, it will coſt him a thouſand pound ere a be cured.

Meſſ. I will holde friends with you Ladie.

Beat. Do good friend.

Leon. You will neuer runne madde niece.

Beat. No, not till a hote Ianuary.

Meſſ. Don Pedro is approacht.

Enter don Pedro, Claudio, Benedicke, Balthaſar and Iohn the baſtard.

Pedro Good ſignior Leonato, are you come to meet your trouble: the faſhion of the world is, to auoyd coſt, and you incounter it.

Leon. Neuer came trouble to my houſe, in the likeneſſe of your grace, for trouble being gone, comfort ſhould remaine: but when you depart from mee, ſorrow abides, and happines takes his leaue.

Pedro You embrace your charge too willingly: I thincke this is your daughter.

Leonato Her mother hath many times tolde me ſo.

Bened. Were you in doubt ſir that you askt her?

Leonato Signior Benedicke, no, for then were you a child.

Pedro You haue it full Benedicke, wee may gheſſe by this, what you are, being a man, truely the Lady fathers her ſelfe:

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be happy Lady, for you are like an honourable father.

Be. If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not haue his head on her shoulders for all Messina as like him as she is.

Beat. I wonder that you will still be talking, signior Benedicke, no body markes you.

Bene. What my deere lady Disdaine! are you yet liuing?

Bea. Is it possible Disdaine should die, while she hath such meete foode to feede it, as signior Benedicke? Curtesie it selfe must conuert to Disdaine, if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is curtesie a turne-coate, but it is certaine I am loued of all Ladies, onelie you excepted: and I would I could finde in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truely I loue none.

Beat. A deere happinesse to women, they would else haue beene troubled with a pernitious suter, I thanke God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that, I had rather heare my dog barke at a crow, than a man sweare he loues me.

Bene. God keepe your Ladiship still in that mind, so some Gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scratcht face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, and twere such a face as yours were.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrat teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue, is better than a beast of yours.

Ben. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. but keep your way a Gods name, I haue done.

Beat. You alwayes end with a iades tricke, I knowe you of olde.

Pedro That is the summe of all: Leonato, signior Claudio, and signior Benedicke, my deere friend Leonato, hath inuited you all, I tell him we shall stay here, at the least a moneth, and he heartily praies some occasion may detaine vs longer, I dare sweare he is no hypocrite, but praies from his heart.

Leon. If you sweare, my lord, you shall not be forsworne, let mee bidde you welcome, my lord, being reconciled to the Prince your brother: I owe you all duetie.

Iohn I thanke you, I am not of many wordes, but I thanke

Leon.

Leon. Please it your grace leade on?

Pedro Your hand Leonato, we will go together.

Exeunt. Manent Benedicke & Claudio.

Clau. Benedicke, didst thou note the daughter of Signior (Leonato?

Bene. I noted her not, but I lookte on her,

Clau. Is she not a modest yong ladie?

Bene. Do you question me as an honest man should doe, for my simple true iudgement? or would you haue me speake after my custome, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claudio No, I pray thee speake in sober iudgement.

Bene. Why yfaith me thinks shees too low for a hie praise, too browne for a faire praise, and too litle for a great praise, onlie this commendation I can affoord her, that were shee other then she is, she were vnhansome, and being no other, but as she is, I do not like her.

Claudio Thou thinkest I am in sport, I pray thee tell mee truelie how thou lik'st her.

Bene. Would you buie her that you enquier after her?

Claudio Can the world buie such a iewel?

Bene. Yea, and a case to putte it into, but speake you this with a sad brow? or doe you play the flowting iacke, to tell vs Cupid is a good Hare-finder, and Vulcan a rare Carpenter; Come, in what key shall a man take you to go in the song?

Claudio In mine eie, shee is the sweetest Ladie that euer I lookt on.

Bened. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: theres her cosin, and she were not possest with a fury, exceedes her as much in beautie, as the first of Maie dooth the last of December: but I hope you haue no intent to turne husband, haue you?

Claudio I would scarce trust my selfe, though I had sworne the contrarie, if Hero would be my wife.

Bened. Ist come to this? in faith hath not the worlde one man but he will weare his cappe with suspition? shall I neuer see a batcheller of three score againe? go to yfaith, and thou wilt needes thrust thy necke into a yoke, weare the print of it, and sigh away sundaies: looke, don Pedro is returned to seeke you.

Enter

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Enter don Pedro, Iohn the bastard.

Pedro What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonatoes?

Bene. I would your Grace would constraine me to tell.

Pedro I charge thee on thy allegeance.

Ben. You heare, Count Claudio, I can be secret as a dumb man, I woulde haue you thinke so (but on my allegiance, marke you this, on my allegiance) he is in loue. with who? now that is your Graces part: marke how short his answer is, with Hero Leonatoes short daughter.

Clau. If this were so, so were it vttred.

Bened. Like the olde tale, my Lord, it is not so, nor twas not so: but indeede, God forbid it should be so.

Claudio If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

Pedro Amen, if you loue her, for the Lady is very well worthy.

Claudio You speake this to fetch me in, my Lord.

Pedro By my troth I speake my thought.

Claudio And in faith, my Lord, I spoke mine.

Bened. And by my two faiths and troths, my Lorde, I spoke mine.

Clau. That I loue her, I feele.

Pedro That she is worthy, I know.

Bened. That I neither feele how she should be loued, nor know how she should be worthie, is the opinion that fire can not melt out of me, I will die in it at the stake.

Pedro Thou wast euer an obstinate heretique in the despight of Beauty.

Clau. And neuer could maintaine his part, but in the force of his wil.

Bene. That a woman conceiued me, I thanke her: that she brought me vp, I likewise giue her most humble thankes: but that I will haue a rechate winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an inuisible baldricke, all women shall pardon mee: because I will not doe them the wrong to mistrust any, I will doe my selfe the right to trust none: and the fine is, (for the which

which I may go the finer,) I will liue a bacheller.

Pedro I shall see thee ere I die, looke pale with loue.

Bene. With anger, with sickenesse, or with hunger, my Lord, not with loue: proue that euer I loose more blood with loue then I will get againe with drinking, picke out mine eies with a Ballad-makers penne, and hang me vp at the doore of a brothel house for the signe of blinde Cupid.

Pedro Well, if euer thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prooue a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a Cat, and shoote at me, and he that hits me, let him be clapt on the shoulder, and calld Adam.

Pedro Well, as time shal trie: in time the sauage bull doth beare the yoake.

Bene. The sauage bull may, but if euer the sensible Benedicke beare it, plucke off the bulls hornes, and set them in my forehead, and let me be vildly painted, and in such great letters as they write, here is good horse to hyre: let them signifie vnder my signe, here you may see Benedicke the married man.

Claudio If this should euer happen, thou wouldst be horn madde.

Pedro Nay, if Cupid haue not spent all his quiuer in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bened. I looke for an earthquake too then.

Pedro Well, you will temporize with the howres, in the meane time, good signior Benedicke, repaire to Leonatoes, commend me to him, and tell him I will not faile him at supper, for indeede he hath made great preparation.

Bened. I haue almost matter enough in mee for such an Embassage, and so I commit you.

Clau. To the tuition of God: from my house if I had it.

Pedro The sixt of Iuly: your louing friend Benedicke.

Bened. Nay mocke not, mocke not, the body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guardes are but slightly basted on neither, ere you flowt old ends any further, examine your conscience, and so I leaue you. *exit*

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Claudio My liege, your Highneſſe nowe may doe mee good.

Pedro My loue is thine to teach, teach it but how,
And thou ſhalt ſee how apt it is to learne
Any hard leſſon that may do thee good.

Clau. Hath Leonato any ſonne, my lord?

Pedro No childe but Hero, ſhees his onely heire:
Dooſt thou affect her Claudio?

Claudio O my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I lookt vpon her with a ſouldiers eie,
That likt, but had a rougher taske in hand,
Than to driue liking to the name of loue:
But now I am returnde, and that warre-thoughts,
Haue left their places vacant: in their roomes,
Come thronging ſoft and delicate deſires,
All prompting mee how faire yong Hero is,
Saying I likt her ere I went to warres.

Pedro Thou wilt be like a louer preſently,
And tire the hearer with a booke of words,
If thou doſt loue faire Hero, cheriſh it,
And I wil breake with hir, and with her father,
And thou ſhalt haue her: waſt not to this end,
That thou beganſt to twiſt ſo fine a ſtorie?

Clau. How ſweetly you do minſter to loue,
That know loues griefe by his complexion!
But left my liking might too ſodaine ſeeme,
I would haue ſalude it with a longer treatiſe.

Pedro What need the bridge much broder then the flood?
The faireſt graunt is the neceſſitie:
Looke what wil ſerue is fit: tis once, thou loueſt,
And I wil fit thee with the remedie,
I know we ſhall haue reuelling to night,
I wil aſſume thy part in ſome diſguiſe,
And tell faire Hero I am Claudio,
And in her boſome ile vnclaſpe my heart,
And take her hearing priſoner with the force

And ſtrong incounter of my amorous tale:
Then after, to her father will I breake,
And the concluſion is, ſhe ſhal be thine,
In practiſe let vs put it preſently. *exeunt.*

Enter Leonato and an old man brother to Leonato

Leo. How now brother, where is my coſen your ſonne, hath he prouided this muſique?

Old He is very buſie about it, but brother, I can tell you ſtrange newes that you yet dreampt not of.

Leo. Are they good?

Old As the euents ſtampes them, but they haue a good couer: they ſhew well outward, the prince and Count Claudio walking in a thicke pleached alley in mine orchard, were thus much ouer-heard by a man of mine: the prince diſcouered to Claudio that he loued my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a daunce, and if he found her accordant, he meant to take the preſent time by the top, and inſtantly breake with you of it.

Leo Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

Old A good ſharp fellow, I wil ſend for him, and queſtion him your ſelfe.

Leo. No, no, we wil hold it as a dreame til it appeare it ſelf: but I will acquaint my daughter withall, that ſhe may bee the better prepared for an anſwer, if peraduenture this be true: go you and tel hir of it: cooſins, you know what you haue to doe, O I crie you mercie friend, go you with me and I wil vſe your skill: good coſin haue a care this buſie time. *exeunt.*

Enter ſir Iohn the baſtard, and Conrade his companion.

Con. What the goodyeere my lord, why are you thus out of meaſure ſad?

Iohn There is no meaſure in the occaſion that breeds, therfore the ſadneſſe is without limit.

Con. You ſhould heare reaſon.

Iohn And when I haue heard it, what bleſſing brings it?

Con If not a preſent remedy, at leaſt a patient ſufferance.

Iohn I wonder that thou (being as thou ſaiſt, thou art, borne vnder Saturne) goeſt about to apply a morall medicine, to a

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mortifying mischiefe: I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I haue cause, and smile at no mans iests, eate when I haue stomack, and wait for no mans leisure: sleep when I am drowsie, and tend on no mans businesse, laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humor.

Con. Yea but you must not make the full show of this till you may do it without controllment, you haue of late stoode out against your brother, and he hath tane you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take true root, but by the faire weather that you make your self, it is needful that you frame the season for your owne haruest.

Iohn I had rather be a canker in a hedge, then a rose in his grace, and it better fits my bloud to be disdain'd of all, then to fashion a carriage to rob loue from any: in this (though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man) it must not be denied but I am a plain dealing villaine, I am trusted with a muzzel, and enfraunchisde with a clogge, therfore I haue decreed, not to sing in my cage: if I had my mouth I would bite: if I had my liberty I would do my liking: in the mean time, let me be that I am, and seeke not to alter me.

Con. Can you make no vse of your discontent?

Iohn I make all vse of it, for I vse it only,
Who comes here? what newes Borachio?

Enter Borachio.

Bor. I came yonder from a great supper, the prince your brother is royally entertain'd by Leonato, and I can giue you intelligence of an intended mariage.

Iohn Will it serue for any model to build mischiefe on? what is he for a foole that betrothes himselfe to vnquietnesse?

Bor. Mary it is your bothers right hand.

Iohn Who, the most exquisite Claudio?

Bor. Euen he.

Iohn A proper squier, and who, and who, which way looks he?

Bor. Mary one Hero the daughter and heire of Leonato.

Iohn A very forward March-chicke, how came you to this?

Bor.

Bor Being entertain'd for a perfumer, as I was smoaking a musty roome, comes me the prince and Claudio, hand in hand in sad conference: I whipt me behind the arras, and there heard it agreed vpon, that the prince should wooe Hero for himselfe, and hauing obtain'd her, giue her to Counte Claudio.

Iohn Come, come, let vs thither, this may proue food to my displeasure, that yong start-vp hath all the glory of my ouerthrow: if I can crosse him any way, I bleese my selfe euery way, you are both sure, and wil assist me.

Conr. To the death my Lord.

Iohn Let vs to the great supper, their cheere is the greater that I am subdued, would the cooke were a my mind, shall we go proue whats to be done?

Bor. Wee le wait vpon your lordship. *exit.*

Enter Leonato his brother, his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his neece, and a kinsman.

Leonato Was not counte Iohn here at supper?

brother I saw him not.

Beatrice How tartely that gentleman lookes, I neuer can see him but I am heart-burn'd an hower after.

Hero He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beatrice He were an excellent man that were made iust in the mid-way between him and Benedick, the one is too like an image and saies nothing, and the other too like my ladies eldest sonne, euermore tatling.

Leonato Then halfe signior Benedickes tongue in Counte Iohns mouth, and halfe Counte Iohns melancholy in Signior Benedickes face.

Beatrice With a good legge and a good foote vncle, and money inough in his purse, such a man would winne any woman in the world if a could get her good will.

Leonato By my troth neece thou wilt neuer get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

brother Infaith shees too curst.

Beatrice Too curst is more then curst, I shall lessen

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Gods ſending that way, for it is ſaide, God ſends a curſt cow ſhort hornes, but to a cow too curſt, he ſends none.

Leonato So, by being too curſt, God will ſend you no hornes.

Beatrice Iuſt, if he ſend me no husband, for the which bleſſing, I am at him vpon my knees euery morning and euening: Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face, I had rather lie in the woollen!

Leonato You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

Beatrice What ſhould I do with him, dreſſe him in my apparell and make him my waiting gentlewoman? he that hath a beard, is more then a youth: and he that hath no beard, is leſſe then a man: and he that is more then a youth, is not for me, and he that is leſſe then a man, I am not for him, therefore I will euen take ſixpence in earneſt of the Berrord, and leade his apes into hell.

Leonato Well then, go you into hell.

Beatrice No but to the gate, and there will the diuell meete me like an old cuckold with hornes on his head, and ſay, get you to heauen Beatrice, get you to heauen, heeres no place for you maids, ſo deliuer I vp my apes and away to ſaint Peter: for the heauens, he ſhewes me where the Batchellers ſit, and there liue we as merry as the day is long.

brother Well neece, I truſt you will be rulde by your father.

Beatrice Yes faith, it is my coſens duetie to make curſie and ſay, father, as it pleaſe you: but yet for all that coſin, let him be a handſome fellow, or elſe make an other curſie, and ſay, father, as it pleaſe me.

Leonato Well neece, I hope to ſee you one day fitted with a husband.

Beatrice Not til God make men of ſome other mettal then earth, would it not grieue a woman to be ouer-maſterd with a peece of valiant duſt? to make an account of her life to a clod of waiward marle? no vnckle, ile none: Adams ſonnes are my brethren, and truely I holde it a ſinne to match in my kinred.

Leonato

Leonato Daughter, remember what I told you, if the prince do ſolicite you in that kind, you know your anſwer.

Beatrice The fault will be in the muſique coſin, if you be not wooed in good time: if the prince be too important, tell him there is meaſure in euery thing, and ſo daunce out the anſwer, for here me Hero, wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch ijgge, a meaſure, and a cinquepace: the firſt ſuite is hot and haſty like a Scotch ijgge (and ful as fantaſticall) the wedding manerly modeſt (as a meaſure) full of ſtate and aunchentry, and then comes Repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinquepace faſter and faſter, til he ſincke into his graue.

Leonato Coſin you apprehend paſſing ſhrewdly.

Beatrice I haue a good eie vnckle, I can ſee a church by day-light.

Leonato The reuellers are entring brother, make good roome.

Enter prince, Pedro, Claudio, and Benedicke, and Balthaſer, or dumb Iohn.

Pedro Lady will you walke about with your friend?

Hero So, you walke ſoftly, and looke ſweetly, and ſay nothing, I am yours for the walke, and eſpecially when I walk away.

Pedro With me in your company.

Hero I may ſay ſo when I pleaſe.

Pedro And when pleaſe you to ſay ſo?

Hero When I like your fauour, for God defend the lute ſhould be like the caſe.

Pedro My viſor is Philemons roofe, within the houſe is Ioue.

Hero Why then your viſor ſhould be thatcht.

Pedro Speake low if you ſpeake loue.

Bene. Well, I would you did like me.

Mar. So would not I for your owne ſake, for I haue many ill qualities.

Bene. Which is one?

Mar. I ſay my praiers alowd.

Bene.

Bene. I loue you the better, the hearers may cry Amen.

Marg. God match me with a good dancer.

Balth. Amen.

Marg. And God keepe him out of my sight when the dance is done: answer Clarke.

Balth. No more words, the Clarke is answered.

Vrsula I know you well enough, you are signior Antho-nio.

Antho. At a word I am not.

Vrsula I knowe you by the wagling of your head.

Antho. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Vrsula You coulde neuer doe him so ill well, vnlesse you were the very man: heeres his drie hand vp and downe, you are he, you are he.

Antho. At a word, I am not.

Vrsula Come, come, do you thinke I do not know you by your excellent wit? can vertue hide it selfe? go to, mumme, you are he, graces will appeere, and theres an end.

Beat. Will you not tell me who tolde you so?

Bened. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bened. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainefull, and that I had my good wit out of the hundred mery tales: wel, this was signior Benedick that said so.

Bened. Whats he?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.

Bened. Not I, beleeue me.

Beat. Did he neuer make you laugh?

Bened. I pray you what is he?

Beat. Why he is the princes ieaster, a very dull fool, only his gift is, in deuising impossible slaunders, none but Libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villanie, for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and beate him: I am sure he is in the Fleete, I would he had boorded me.

Bene. When I know the Gentleman, ile tell him what you *Beat.* say.

Beat. Do, do, heele but breake a comparison or two on me, which peraduenture, (not markt, or not laught at) strikes him into melancholy, and then theres a partrige wing saued, for the foole will eate no supper that night: wee must follow the leaders.

Bene. In euery good thing.

Beat. Nay, if they leade to any ill, I will leaue them at the next turning. *Dance exeunt*

Iohn Sure my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawne her father to breake with him about it: the Ladies follow her, and but one visor remaines.

Borachio And that is Claudio, I knowe him by his bearing.

Iohn Are not you signior Benedicke?

Clau. You know me well, I am he.

Iohn Signior, you are very neere my brother in his loue, he is enamourd on Hero, I pray you dissuade him from her, she is no equall for his birth, you may doe the parte of an honest man in it.

Claudio How know you he loues her?

Iohn I heard him sweare his affection.

Borac. So did I too, and he swore hee would marry her to night.

Iohn Come let vs to the banquet. *exeunt: manet Clau.*

Claud. Thus answer I in name of Benedicke,
But heare these ill newes with the eares of Claudio:
Tis certaine so, the Prince wooes for himselfe,
Friendship is constant in all other things,
Saue in the office and affaires of loue:
Therefore all hearts in loue vse their owne tongues.
Let euery eie negotiate for it selfe,
And trust no Agent: for Beauty is a witch,
Against whose charmes, faith melteth into blood:
This is an accident of hourely proofe, (dicke
Which I mistrusted not: farewel therefore Hero. *Enter Bene-*

Benedicke Count Claudio.

Claudio Yea, the same.

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Bene. Come, will you go with me?

Claudio Whither?

Bene. Euen to the next willow, about your owne busines, county: what fashion will you weare the garland of? about your necke, like an Vsurers chaine? or vnder your arme, like a Lieutenants scarffe? you must weare it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

Claudio I wish him ioy of her.

Bened. Why thats spoken like an honest Drouier, so they sell bullockes: but did you thinke the Prince would haue serued you thus?

Claudio I pray you leaue me.

Benedicke Ho now you strike like the blindman, twas the boy that stole your meate, and youle beate the post.

Claudio If it will not be, ile leaue you. *exit*

Benedicke Alas poore hurt foule, now will hee creepe into sedges: but that my Ladie Beatrice should know me, and not know mee: the princes foole! hah, it may be I goe vnder that title, because I am merry: yea but so I am apte to doe my selfe wrong: I am not so reputed, it is the base (though bitter) disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into her person, and so giues me out: well, ile be reuenged as I may.

Enter the Prince, Hero, Leonato, Iohn and Borachio, and Conrade.

Pedro Now signior, wheres the Counte, did you see him?

Benedicke Troth my lord, I haue played the part of Ladie Fame, I found him heere as melancholy as a Lodge in a Warren, I told him, and I thinke I told him true, that your grace had got the goodwil of this yoong Lady, and I offred him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to binde him vp a rod, as being worthie to bee whipt.

Pedro To be whipt, whats his fault?

Benedicke The flatte transgression of a Schoole-boy, who being ouer-ioyed with finding a birds nest, shewes it his companion, and he steales it.

Pedro Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? the transgression is in the stealer.

Benedicke Yet it had not beene amisse the rodde had beene made, & the garland too, for the garland he might haue worn himselfe, and the rodde he might haue bestowed on you, who (as I take it) haue stolne his birds nest.

Pedro I wil but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Benedicke If their singing answer your saying, by my faith you say honestly.

Pedro The ladie Beatrice hath a quarrell to you, the Gentleman that daunst with her, told her shee is much wronged by you.

Bened. O shee misused me past the indurance of a blocke: an oake but with one greene leafe on it, would haue answered her: my very visor beganne to assume life, and scold with her: she tolde me, not thinking I had beene my selfe, that I was the Princes iester, that I was duller than a great thawe, huddleing iest vpon iest, with such impossible conueiance vpon me, that I stoode like a man at a marke, with a whole army shooting at me: she speakes poynyards, and euery word stabbes: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no liuing neere her, shee would infect to the north starre: I would not marry her, though shee were indowed with al that Adam had left him before he transgrest, she would haue made Hercules haue turnd spit, yea, and haue cleft his club to make the fire too: come, talke not of her, you shall find her the infernall Ate in good apparell, I would to God some scholler would coniure her, for certainely, while she is heere, a man may liue as quiet in hell, as in a sanctuarie, and people sinne vpon purpose, because they would goe thither, so indeede all disquiet, horrour, and perturbation followes her.

Enter Claudio and Beatrice.

Pedro Looke heere she comes.

Benedicke Will your grace command me any seruice to the worldes end? I will go on the slightest arrand now to the Antypodes that you can deuise to send mee on: I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the furthest inch of Asia: bring you

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the length of Prester Iohns foot: fetch you a haire off the great Chams beard: doe you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather than holde three words conference, with this harpy, you haue no imployment for me?

Pedro None, but to desire your good company.

Benedicke O God sir, heeres a dish I loue not, I cannot indure my Ladie Tongue. *exit.*

Pedro Come Lady, come, you haue lost the heart of Signior Benedicke.

Beatrice Indeed my Lord, he lent it me awhile, and I gaue him vse for it, a double heart for his single one, mary once before he wonne it of me, with false dice, therefore your grace may well say I haue lost it.

Pedro You haue put him downe Lady, you haue put him downe.

Beatrice So I would not he should do me, my Lord, lest I should prooue the mother of fooles: I haue brought Counte Claudio, whom you sent me to seeke.

Pedro Why how now Counte, wherefore are you sad?

Claudio Not sad my Lord.

Pedro How then? sicke?

Claudio Neither, my Lord.

Beatrice The Counte is neither sad, nor sicke, nor merry, nor well: but ciuill Counte, ciuil as an orange, and something of that iealous complexion.

Pedro Ifaith Lady, I think your blazon to be true, though ile be sworne, if he be so, his conceit is false: heere Claudio, I haue wooed in thy name, and faire Hero is won, I haue broke with her father, and his good will obtained, name the day of marriage, and God giue thee ioy.

Leonato Counte take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it.

Beatrice Speake Counte, tis your Qu.

Claudio Silence is the perfectest Herault of ioy, I were but little happy if I could say, how much? Lady, as you are mine, I am yours, I giue away my selfe for you, and doate vpon the exchange. *Beatr.*

Beat. Speake cosin, or (if you cannot) stop his mouth with a kisse, and let not him speake neither.

Pedro Infaith lady you haue a merry heart.

Beatr. Yea my lord I thanke it, poore foole it keepes on the windy side of Care, my cosin tells him in his eare that he is in her heart

Claud. And so she doth cosin.

Beat. Good Lord for aliance: thus goes euery one to the world but I, and I am sun-burnt, I may sit in a corner and crie, heigh ho for a husband.

Pedro Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather haue one of your fathers getting: hath your grace ne're a brother like you? your father got excellent husbands if a maide coulde come by them.

Prince Will you haue me? lady.

Beatr. No my lord, vnles I might haue another for working-daies, your grace is too costly to weare euery day: but I beseech your grace pardon me, I was born to speake all mirth, and no matter.

Prince Your silence most offends me, and to be merry, best becomes you, for out a question, you were borne in a merry hower.

Beatr. No sure my lord, my mother cried, but then there was a starre daunst, and vnder that was I borne, cosins God giue you ioy.

Leonato Neece, will you looke to those things I tolde you of?

Beat I crie you mercy vncle, by your graces pardon.
exit Beatrice.

Prince By my troth a pleasant spirited lady.

Leon. Theres little of the melancholy element in her my lord, she is neuer sad, but when she sleeps, & not euer sad then: for I haue heard my daughter say, she hath often dreampt of vnhappines, and wakt her selfe with laughing.

Pedro She cannot indure to heare tell of a husband.

Leonato O by no meanes, she mockes al her wooers out of sute.

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Prince She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

Leonato O Lord,my lord,if they were but a weeke married, they would talke themselues madde.

Prince Countie Claudio, when meane you to goe to church?

Clau. To morow my lord, Time goes on crutches,til Loue haue all his rites.

Leonato Not til monday, my deare sonne,which is hence a iust seuennight,and a time too briefe too, to haue al things answer my mind.

Prince Come,you shake the head at so long a breathing, but I warrant thee Claudio,the time shall not go dully by vs, I wil in the interim, vndertake one of Hercules labors,which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the lady Beatrice into a mountaine of affection,th'one with th'other, I would faine haue it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it,if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall giue you direction.

Leonato My lord,I am for you,though it cost me ten nights watchings.

Claud. And I my Lord.

Prince And you too gentle Hero?

Hero I wil do any modest office,my lord,to help my cosin to a good husband.

Prince And Benedicke is not the vnhopefullest husband that I know:thus farre can I praise him,he is of a noble strain, of approoued valour,and confirmde honesty, I will teach you how to humour your cosin, that she shall fal in loue with Benedicke, and I,with your two helpes, wil so practise on Benedicke, that in dispight of his quicke wit,and his queasie stomacke,he shall fall in loue with Beatrice:if we can do this, Cupid is no longer an Archer, his glory shall bee ours, for we are the onely loue-gods, goe in with mee, and I will tell you my drift. *exit.*

Enter Iohn and Borachio.

Iohn It is so,the Counte Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

Bora. Yea my lord,but I can crosse it.

Iohn

Iohn Any barre,any crosse,any impediment, will be medcinable to me,I am sicke in displeasure to him,and whatsoeuer comes athwart his affection, ranges euenly with mine, how canst thou crosse this marriage?

Bor. Not honestly my lord,but so couertly,that no dishonesty shall appeare in me.

Iohn Shew me briefely how.

Bor. I thinke I told your lordship a yeere since, how much I am in the fauour of Margaret, the waiting gentlewoman to Hero.

Iohn I remember.

Bor. I can at any vnseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to looke out at her ladies chamber window.

Iohn What life is in that to be the death of this mariage?

Bor. The poison of that lies in you to temper, goe you to the prince your brother, spare not to tell him, that he hath wronged his honor in marrying the renowned Claudio,whose estimation do you mightily hold vp, to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

Iohn What proofe shall I make of that?

Bor. Proofe enough,to misuse the prince, to vexe Claudio, to vndoe Hero, and kill Leonato, looke you for any other issue?

Iohn Onely to dispight them I will endeuour any thing.

Bor. Go then,find me a meet houre,to draw don Pedro and the Counte Claudio alone, tell them that you know that Hero loues me, intend a kind of zeale both to the prince & Claudio (as in loue of your brothers honor who hath made this match) and his friends reputation, who is thus like to bee cosen'd with the semblance of a maid,that you haue discouer'd thus:they wil scarcely beleeue this without triall:offer them instances which shall beare no lesse likelihood, than to see me at her chamber window,heare me call Margaret Hero,heare Marg.terme me Claudio,& bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding,for in the mean time,I wil so fashion the matter,that Hero shal be absent and there shal appeere such seeming truth of Heroes disloyaltie, that iealousie shal be cald assurance

rance, and al the preparation ouerthrowne.

Iohn Grow this to what aduerſe iſſue it can, I will put it in practiſe: be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thouſand ducates.

Bor. Be you conſtant in the accuſation, and my cunning ſhall not ſhame me.

Iohn I will preſently go learne their day of marriage. *exit*

Enter Benedicke alone.

Bene. Boy.

Boy Signior.

Bene. In my chamber window lies a booke, bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already ſir. *exit.*

Bene. I know that, but I would haue thee hence and here againe. I do much wonder, that one man ſeeing how much an other man is a foole, when he dedicates his behauiours to loue, wil after he hath laught at ſuch ſhallow follies in others, becom the argument of his owne ſcorne, by falling in loue, and ſuch a man is Claudio, I haue knowne when there was no muſique with him but the drumme and the fife, and now had he rather heare the taber and the pipe: I haue knowne when he would haue walkt ten mile afoot, to ſee a good armour, and now wil he lie ten nights awake caruing the faſhion of a new dublet: he was woont to ſpeake plaine, and to the purpoſe (like an honeſt man and a ſouldier) and now is he turnd ortography, his words are a very fantaſticall banquet, iuſt ſo many ſtrange diſhes: may I be ſo conuerted and ſee with theſe eies? I cannot tell, I thinke not: I wil not be ſworne but loue may transforme me to an oyſter, but ile take my oath on it, till he haue made and oyſter of me, he ſhall neuer make me ſuch a foole: one woman is faire, yet I am well; an other is wiſe, yet I am well: an other vertuous, yet I am wel: but till all graces be in one woman, one womā ſhal not com in my grace: rich ſhe ſhal be thats certain, wiſe, or ile none, vertuous, or ile neuer cheapen her: faire, or ile neuer looke on her, mild, or come not neare me, noble, or not I for an angell, of good diſcourſe, an excellent muſitian, and her haire

haire ſhall be of what colour it pleaſe God, hah! the prince and monſieur Loue, I wil hide me in the arbor.

Enter prince, Leonato, Claudio, Muſicke.

Prince Come ſhall we heare this muſique?

Claud. Yea my good lord: how ſtil the euening is,
As huſht on purpoſe to grace harmonie!

Prince See you where Benedicke hath hid himſelfe?

Claud. O very wel my lord: the muſique ended,
Weele fit the kid-foxe with a penny worth.

Enter Balthaſer with muſicke.

Prince Come Balthaſer, weele heare that ſong againe.

Balth. O good my lord, taxe not ſo bad a voice,
To ſlaunder muſicke any more then once.

Prince It is the witneſſe ſtill of excellencie,
To put a ſtrange face on his owne perfection,
I pray thee ſing, and let me wooe no more.

Balth. Becauſe you talke of wooing I will ſing,
Since many a wooer doth commence his ſute,
To her he thinkes not worthy, yet he wooes,
Yet will he ſweare he loues.

Prince Nay pray thee come,
Or if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Do it in notes.

Balth. Note this before my notes,
Theres not a note of mine thats worth the noting.

Prince Why theſe are very crotchets that he ſpeakes,
Note notes forſooth, and nothing.

Bene. Now diuine aire, now is his ſoule rauiſht, is it not ſtrange that ſheepes guts ſhould hale ſoules out of mens bodies? well a horne for my mony when alls done.

The Song.

Sigh no more ladies, ſigh no more,
Men were deceiuers euer,
One foote in ſea, and one on ſhore,
To one thing conſtant neuer,
Then ſigh not ſo, but let them go,
And be you blith and bonnie,

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Conuerting all your soundes of woe,
Into hey nony nony.

Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,
Of dumps so dull and heauy,
The fraud of men was euer so,
Since summer first was leauy,
Then sigh not so,&c.

Prince By my troth a good song.
Balth. And an ill singer my lord.
Prince Ha, no no faith, thou singst wel enough for a shift.
Ben. And he had bin a dog that should haue howld thus, they would haue hangd him, and I pray God his bad voice bode no mischeefe, I had as liue haue heard the night-rauen, come what plague could haue come after it.
Prince Yea mary, doost thou heare Balthasar? I pray thee get vs some excellent musique: for to morow night we would haue it at the ladie Heroes chamber window.
Balth. The best I can my lord.

Exit Balthasar.

Prince Do so, farewell. Come hither Leonato, what was it you told mee of to day, that your niece Beatrice was in loue with signior Benedicke?
Cla. O I, stalke on, stalk on, the foule sits, I did neuer think that lady would haue loued any man.
Leo. No nor I neither, but most wonderful, that she should so dote on signior Benedicke, whome she hath in all outward behauiors seemd euer to abhorre.
Bene. Is t possible? sits the wind in that corner?
Leo. By my troth my Lord, I cannot tell what to thinke of it, but that she loues him with an inraged affection, it is past the infinite of thought.
Prince May be she doth but counterfeit.
Claud. Faith like enough.
Leon. O God! counterfeit? there was neuer counterfeit of passion, came so neare the life of passion as she discouers it.

Prince

Prince Why what effects of passion shewes she?
Claud. Baite the hooke wel, this fish will bite.
Leon. What effects my Lord? she wil sit you, you heard my daughter tell you how.
Claud. She did indeede.
Prince How, how I pray you! you amaze me, I would haue thought her spirite had beene inuincible against all assaults of affection.
Leo. I would haue sworn it had, my lord, especially against Benedicke.
Bene. I should think this a gull, but that the white bearded fellow speakes it: knauery cannot sure hide himself in such reuerence.
Claud. He hath tane th'infection, hold it vp.
Prince Hath shee made her affection knowne to Benedicke?
Leonato No, and sweares shee neuer will, thats her torment.
Claudio Tis true indeed, so your daughter saies: shall I, saies she, that haue so oft encountred him with scorne, write to him that I loue him?
Leo. This saies she now when she is beginning to write to him, for sheel be vp twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smocke, til she haue writ a sheete of paper: my daughter tels vs all.
Clau. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a prety iest your daughter told of vs.
Leonato O when she had writ it, and was reading it ouer, she found Benedicke and Beatrice betweene the sheete.
Claudio That.
Leon. O she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence, raild at her self, that she should be so immodest to write, to one that she knew would flout her, I measure him, saies she, by my own spirit, for I should flout him, if he writ to me, yea though I loue him I should.
Clau. Then downe vpon her knees she falls, weepes, sobs, beates her heart, teares her haire, prayes, curses, O sweet Bene-

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dicke, God giue me patience.

Leonato She doth indeed, my daughter saies so, and the extasie hath so much ouerborne her, that my daughter is sometime afeard shee will doe a desperate out-rage to her selfe, it is very true.

Prince It were good that Benedicke knew of it by some other, if she will not discouer it.

Claudio To what end? he would make but a sport of it, and torment the poore Lady worse.

Prince And he should, it were an almes to hang him, shees an excellent sweete lady, and (out of all suspition,) she is vertuous.

Claudio And she is exceeding wise.

Prince In euery thing but in louing Benedicke.

Leonato O my Lord, wisedome and blood combating in so tender a body, we haue ten proofes to one, that blood hath the victory, I am sory for her, as I haue iust cause, beeing her vncle, and her gardian.

Prince I would shee had bestowed this dotage on mee, I would haue daft all other respects, and made her halfe my self: I pray you tell Benedicke of it, and heare what a will say.

Leonato Were it good thinke you?

Claudio Hero thinkes surely she will die, for she sayes shee will die, if he loue her not, and shee will die ere shee make her loue knowne, and she will die if he wooe her, rather than shee will bate one breath of her accustomed crosnesse.

Prince She doth well, if shee should make tender of her loue, tis very possible heele scorne it, for the man (as you know all) hath a contemptible spirite.

Claudio He is a very proper man.

Prince He hath indeede a good outward happines.

Claudio Before God, and in my mind, very wise.

Prince Hee dooth indeede shew some sparkes that are like wit.

Claudio And I take him to be valiant.

Prince As Hector, I assure you, and in the mannaging of quarrels you may say he is wise, for either hee auoydes them with

with great discretion, or vndertakes them with a most christianlike feare.

Leonato If he do feare God, a must necessarily keep peace, if hee breake the peace, hee ought to enter into a quarrel with feare and trembling.

Prince And so will hee doe, for the man doth feare God, howsoeuer it seemes not in him, by some large iestes hee will make: well I am sory for your niece, shall we go seeke Benedicke, and tell him of her loue?

Claudio Neuer tell him, my Lord, let her weare it out with good counsell.

Leonato Nay thats impossible, shee may weare her heart out first.

Prince Well, we will heare further of it by your daughter, let it coole the while, I loue Benedicke wel, and I could wish he would modestly examine himselfe, to see how much he is vnworthy so good a lady.

Leonato My lord, will you walke? dinner is ready.

Claudio If he do not doate on her vppon this, I will neuer trust my expectation.

Prince Let there be the same nette spread for her, and that must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry: the sporte will be, when they holde one an opinion of an others dotage, and no such matter, thats the scene that I woulde see, which wil be meerely a dumbe shew: let vs send her to call him in to dinner.

Benedicke This can be no tricke, the conference was sadly borne, they haue the trueth of this from Hero, they seeme to pittie the Lady: it seemes her affections haue their full bent: loue me? why it must be requited: I heare how I am censurde, they say I will beare my selfe prowdly, if I perceiue the loue come from her: they say too, that she will rather die than giue anie signe of affection: I did neuer thinke to marry, I must not seeme prowd, happy are they that heare their detractions, and can put them to mending: they say the Lady is faire, tis a trueth, I can beare them witnesse: and vertuous, tis so, I cannot reproue it, and wise, but for louing me, by my troth it is

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no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her follie, for I will be horribly in loue with her, I may chaunce haue some odde quirkes and remnants of witte broken on me, because I haue railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loues the meate in his youth, that he cannot indure in his age. Shall quippes and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the carreere of his humor? No, the world must be peopled. When I saide I woulde die a batcheller, I did not think I should liue til I were married, here comes Beatrice: by this day, shees a faire lady, I doe spie some markes of loue in her.

Enter Beatrice.

Beatr. Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Faire Beatrice, I thanke you for your paines.

Beat. I tooke no more paines for those thankes, then you take paines to thanke me, if it had bin painful I would not haue come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message.

Beat. Yea iust so much as you may take vppon a knives point, and choake a daw withall: you haue no stomach signior, fare you well. *exit.*

Bene. Ha, against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner: theres a double meaning in that: I took no more paines for those thanks thē you took pains to thank me, thats as much as to say, any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks: if I do not take pitty of her I am a villaine, if I do not loue her I am a Iew, I will go get her picture, *exit.*

Enter Hero and two Gentlewomen, Margaret, and Vrsley.

Hero Good Margaret runne thee to the parlour,
There shalt thou find my cosin Beatrice,
Proposing with the prince and Claudio,
Whisper her eare and tell her I and Vrsley,
Walke in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her, say that thou ouer-heardst vs,
And bid her steale into the pleached bowere
Where hony-suckles ripened by the sunne,

Forbid

Forbid the sunne to enter: like fauourites,
Made proud by princes, that aduaunce their pride,
Against that power that bred it, there will she hide her,
To listen our propose, this is thy office,
Beare thee well in it, and leaue vs alone.

Marg. Ile make her come I warrant you presently.

Hero Now Vrsula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley vp and downe,
Our talke must onely be of Benedicke,
When I do name him let it be thy part,
To praise him more than euer man did merite,
My talke to thee must be how Benedicke,
Is sicke in loue with Beatrice: of this matter,
Is little Cupids crafty arrow made,
That onely wounds by heare-say: now begin,
For looke where Beatrice like a Lapwing runs
Close by the ground, to heare our conference.

Enter Beatrice.

Vrsula The pleasantst angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden ores the siluer streame,
And greedily deuoure the treacherous baite:
So angle we for Beatrice, who euen now,
Is couched in the wood-bine couerture,
Feare you not my part of the dialogue.

Hero Then go we neare her that her eare loose nothing,
Of the false sweete baite that we lay for it:
No truly Vrsula, she is too disdainfull,
I know her spirits are as coy and wild,
As haggerds of the rocke.

Vrsula But are you sure,
That Benedicke loues Beatrice so intirely?

Hero So saies the prince, and my new trothed Lord.

Vrsula And did they bid you tel her of it, madame?

Hero They did intreate me to acquaint her of it,
But I perswaded them, if they lou'de Benedicke,
To wish him wrastle with affection,
And neuer to let Beatrice know of it.

Vrsula

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Vrſula Why did you ſo, dooth not the gentleman
Deſerue as full as fortunate a bed,
As euer Beatrice ſhall couch vpon?
Hero O God of loue! I know he doth deſerue,
As much as may be yeelded to a man:
But nature neuer framde a womans hart,
Of prowder ſtuffe then that of Beatrice:
Diſdaine and Scorne ride ſparkling in her eies,
Miſpriſing what they looke on, and her wit
Valewes it ſelfe ſo highly, that to her
All matter els ſeemes weake: ſhe cannot loue,
Nor take no ſhape nor proiect of affection,
She is ſo ſelfe indeared.
Vrſula Sure I thinke ſo,
And therefore certainely it were not good,
She knew his loue leſt ſheele make ſport at it.
Hero Why you ſpeake truth. I neuer yet ſaw man,
How wiſe, how noble, yong, how rarely featured,
But ſhe would ſpel him backward: if faire faced,
She would ſweare the gentleman ſhould be her ſiſter:
If blacke, why Nature drawing of an antique,
Made a foule blot: if tall, a launce ill headed:
If low, an agot very vildly cut:
If ſpeaking, why a vane blowne with all winds:
If ſilent, why a blocke moued with none:
So turnes ſhe euery man the wrong ſide out,
And neuer giues to Truth and Vertue, that
Which ſimpleneſſe and merite purchaſeth.
Vrſula Sure, ſure, ſuch carping is not commendable.
Hero No not to be ſo odde, and from all faſhions,
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable,
But who dare tell her ſo? if I ſhould ſpeake,
She would mocke me into ayre, O ſhe would laugh me
Out of my ſelfe, preſſe me to death with wit,
Therefore let Benedicke like couerd fire,
Conſume away in ſighes, waſte inwardly:
It were a better death, then die with mockes,

Which is as bad as die with tickling.
Vrſula Yet tel her of it, heare what ſhe wil ſay.
Hero No rather I will go to Benedicke,
And counſaile him to fight againſt his paſſion,
And truly ile deuiſe ſome honeſt ſlaunders,
To ſtaine my coſin with, one doth not know,
How much an ill word may impoiſon liking.
Vrſula O do not do your coſin ſuch a wrong,
She cannot be ſo much without true iudgement,
Hauing ſo ſwift and excellent a wit,
As ſhe is priſde to haue, as to refuſe
So rare a gentleman as ſignior Benedicke.
Hero He is the onely man of Italy,
Alwaies excepted my deare Claudio.
Vrſula I pray you be not angry with me, madame,
Speaking my fancy: ſignior Benedicke,
For ſhape, for bearing argument and valour,
Goes formoſt in report through Italy.
Hero Indeed he hath an excellent good name.
Vrſula His excellence did earne it, ere he had it:
When are you married madame?
Hero Why euery day to morrow, come go in,
Ile ſhew thee ſome attyres, and haue thy counſaile,
Which is the beſt to furniſh me to morrow.
Vrſula Shees lured I warrant you,
We haue caught her madame.
Hero If it proue ſo, then louing goes by haps,
Some Cupid kills with arrowes, ſome with traps.
Beat. What fire is in mine eares? can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and ſcorne ſo much?
Contempt, farewel, and maiden pride, adew,
No glory liues behind the backe of ſuch.
And Benedicke, loue on I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy louing hand:
If thou doſt loue, my kindneſſe ſhall incite thee
To bind our loues vp in a holy band.
For others ſay thou doſt deſerue, and I

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Beleeue it better then reportingly. *exit.*

Enter Prince, Claudio, Benedicke, and Leonato.

Prince I doe but ſtay til your mariage be conſummate, and then go I toward Arragon.

Claud. Ile bring you thither my lord, if youle vouchſafe me.

Prince Nay that would be as great a foyle in the new gloſſe of your marriage, as to ſhew a child his new coate and forbid him to weare it, I wil only be bold with Benedick for his company, for from the crowne of his head, to the ſole of his foot, he is all mirth, he hath twice or thrice cut Cupides bow-ſtring, and the little hang-man dare not ſhoot at him, he hath a heart as ſound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinkes, his tongue ſpeakes.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I haue bin.

Leo. So ſay I, me thinkes you are ſadder.

Clau. I hope he be in loue.

Prince Hang him truant, theres no true drop of bloud in him to be truly toucht with loue, if he be ſadde, he wantes money.

Bene. I haue the tooth-ach.

Prince Draw it.

Bene. Hang it.

Clau. You muſt hang it firſt, and draw it afterwards.

Prince What? ſigh for the tooth-ach.

Leon. Where is but a humour or a worme.

Bene. Wel, euery one cannot maſter a griefe, but he that has it.

Clau. Yet ſay I, he is in loue.

Prince There is no appearance of fancie in him, vnleſſe it be a fancy that he hath to ſtrange diſguiſes, as to be a Dutch-man to day, a French-man to morrow, or in the ſhape of two countries at once, as a Germaine from the waſte downward, all ſlops, and a Spaniard from the hip vpward, no dublet: vnleſſe he haue a fancie to this foolery, as it appeares he hath, he is no foole for fancy, as you would haue it appeare he is.

Clau.

Clau. If he be not in loue with ſome woman, there is no beleeuing old ſignes, a bruſhes his hat a mornings, what ſhould that bode?

Prince Hath any man ſeene him at the Barbers?

Clau. No, but the barbers man hath bin ſeene with him, and the olde ornament of his cheeke hath already ſtufft tennis balls.

Leon. Indeed he lookes yonger than he did, by the loſſe of a beard.

Prince Nay a rubs himſelfe with ciuit, can you ſmell him out by that?

Claud. Thats as much as to ſay, the ſweete youthe's in loue.

Bene. The greateſt note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. And when was he woont to waſh his face?

Prince Yea or to paint himſelfe? for the which I heare what they ſay of him.

Claud. Nay but his ieſting ſpirit, which is now crept into a lute-ſtring, and now gouernd by ſtops.

Prince Indeed that tells a heauy tale for him: conclude, conclude, he is in loue.

Claud. Nay but I know who loues him.

Prince That would I know too, I warrant one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions, and in diſpight of al, dies for him.

Prince She ſhall be buried with her face vpwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charme for the tooth-ake, old ſignior, walke aſide with me, I haue ſtudied eight or nine wiſe wordes to ſpeake to you, which theſe hobby-horſes muſt not heare.

Prince For my life to breake with him about Beatrice.

Claud. Tis euen ſo, Hero and Margaret haue by this played their parts with Beatrice, and then the two beares will not bite one another when they meete.

Enter Iohn the Baſtard.

Baſtard My lord and brother, God ſaue you.

Prince Good den brother.

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Baſtard If your leiſure ſerue, I would ſpeake with you.

Prince In priuate?

Baſtard If it pleaſe you, yet Count Claudio may heare, for what I would ſpeake of, concernes him.

Prince Whats the matter?

Baſt. Meanes your Lordſhip to be married to morrow?

Prince You know he does.

Baſt. I know not that when he knowes what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you diſcouer it.

Baſt. You may think I loue you not, let that appeare hereafter, and ayme better at me by that I now will manifeſt, for my brother (I thinke, he holdes you well, and in deareneſſe of heart) hath holpe to effect your enſuing mariage: ſurely ſute ill ſpent, and labor ill beſtowed.

Prince Why whats the matter?

Baſt. I came hither to tel you, and circumſtances ſhortned, (for ſhe has bin too long a talking of) the lady is diſloyall.

Clau. Who Hero?

Baſtar. Euen ſhe, Leonatoes Hero, your Hero, euery mans Hero.

Clau. Diſloyall?

Baſt. The word is too good to paint out her wickedneſſe, I could ſay ſhe were worſe, thinke you of a worſe title, and I wil fit her to it: wonder not till further warrant: go but with me to night you ſhall ſee her chamber window entred, euen the night before her wedding day, if you loue her, then to morow wed her: but it would better fitte your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be ſo?

Prince I wil not thinke it.

Baſt. If you dare not truſt that you ſee, confeſſe not that you knowe: if you will follow mee, I will ſhew you enough, and when you haue ſeene more, and heard more, proceede accordingly.

Claudio If I ſee anie thing to night, why I ſhould not marry her to morrow in the congregation, where I ſhould wed, there will I ſhame her.

Prince

Prince And as I wooed for thee to obtaine her, I wil ioyne with thee, to diſgrace her.

Baſtard I will diſparage her no farther, till you are my witneſſes, beare it coldely but till midnight, and let the iſſue ſhew it ſelfe.

Prince O day vntowardly turned!

Claud. O miſchiefe ſtrangely thwarting!

Baſtard O plague right well preuented! ſo will you ſay, when you haue ſeene the ſequele.

Enter Dogbery and his compartner with the Watch.

Dog. Are you good men and true?

Verges Yea, or elſe it were pitty but they ſhould ſuffer ſaluation body and ſoule.

Dog. Nay, that were a puniſhment too good for them, if they ſhould haue any allegeance in them, being choſen for the Princes watch.

Verges Well, giue them their charge, neighbour Dogbery.

Dogbery Firſt, who thinke you the moſt defartleſſe man to be Conſtable?

Watch 1 Hugh Ote-cake ſir, or George Sea-cole, for they can write and reade.

Dogbery Come hither neighbor Sea-cole. God hath bleſt you with a good name: to be a welfauoured man, is the gift of Fortune, but to write and reade, comes by nature.

Watch 2 Both which maiſter Conſtable.

Dogbery You haue: I knew it would be your anſwer: well, for your fauour ſir, why giue God thanks, and make no boaſt of it, and for your writing and reading, let that appeere when there is no neede of ſuch vanity, you are thought heere to be the moſt ſenſleſſe and fit man for the Conſtable of the watch: therefore beare you the lanthorne: this is your charge, You ſhall comprehend all vagrom men, you are to bidde any man ſtand, in the Princes name.

Watch 2 How if a will not ſtand?

Dogbery Why then take no note of him, but let him goe,

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and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thanke god you are ridde of a knaue.

Verges if he wil not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the Princes subiects.

Dogbery True, and they are to meddle with none but the Princes subiects: you shall also make no noise in the streetes: for, for the watch to babble and to talke, is most tollerable, and not to be indured.

Watch We will rather sleepe than talke, we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogbery Why you speake like an antient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend: onely haue a care that your billes bee not stolne: well, you are to cal at al the alehouses, and bid those that are drunke get them to bed.

Watch How if they will not?

Dogbery Why then let them alone til they are sober, if they make you not then the better answer, you may say, they are not the men you tooke them for.

Watch Well sir.

Dogbery If you meete a thiefe, you may suspect him, by vertue of your office, to be no true man: and for such kind of men, the lesse you meddle or make with them, why the more is for your honesty.

Watch If we know him to be a thiefe, shal we not lay hands on him?

Dogbery Truely by your office you may, but I thinke they that touch pitch will be defilde: the most peaceable way for you, if you doe take a thiefe, is, to let him shew himselfe what he is, and steale out of your companie.

Verges You haue beene alwayes called a mercifull manne, partner.

Dog. Truely I would not hang a dogge by my will, much more a man who hath anie honestie in him.

Verges If you heare a child crie in the night you must call to the nurse and bid her stil it.

Watch How if the nurse be asleepe and will not heare vs.

Dog.

Dog. Why then depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying, for the ewe that will not heare her lamb when it baes, will neuer answer a calfe when he bleates.

Verges Tis very true.

Dog. This is the end of the charge: you constable are to present the princes owne person, if you meete the prince in the night, you may stay him.

Verges Nay birlady that I thinke a cannot.

Dog. Fiue shillings to one on t with any man that knowes the statutes, he may stay him, mary not without the prince be willing, for indeed the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verges Birlady I thinke it be so.

Dog. Ha ah ha, wel masters good night, and there be any matter of weight chaunces, cal vp me, keepe your fellowes counsailes, and your owne, and good night, come neighbour.

Watch Well masters, we heare our charge, let vs goe sitte here vppon the church bench till twoo, and then all to bed.

Dog. One word more, honest neighbors, I pray you watch about signior Leonatoes doore, for the wedding being there to morrow, there is a great coyle to night, adiew, be vigitant I beseech you. *exeunt.*

Enter Borachio and Conrade.

Bor. What Conrade?

Watch Peace, stir not.

Bor. Conrade I say.

Con. Here man, I am at thy elbow.

Bor. Mas and my elbow itcht, I thought there would a scabbe follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answer for that, and now forward with thy tale.

Bor. Stand thee close then vnder this penthouse, for it driseth raine, and I will, like a true drunckard, vtter all to thee.

Watch Some treason masters, yet stand close.

Bor.

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Bor. Therefore know, I haue earned of Dun Iohn a thousand ducates.

Con. Is it possible that any villanie should be so deare?

Bor. Thou shouldst rather aske if it were possible any villanie should be so rich? for when rich villains haue need of poor ones, poore ones may make what price they will.

Con. I wonder at it.

Bor. That shewes thou art vnconfirm'd, thou knowest that the fashion of a dublet, or a hat, or a cloake, is nothing to a man,

Con. Yes it is apparell.

Bor. I meane the fashion.

Con. Yes the fashion is the fashion.

Bor. Tush, I may as well say the foole's the foole, but seest thou not what a deformed theefe this fashion is?

Watch I know that deformed, a has bin a vile theefe, this vij. yeere, a goes vp and downe like a gentle man: I remember his name.

Bor. Didst thou not heare some body?

Con. No, twas the vane on the house.

Bor. Seest thou not (I say) what a deformed thiefe this fashion is, how giddily a turnes about all the Hot-blouds, between foureteene and fiue and thirtie, sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoes souldiours in the rechie painting, sometime like god Bels priests in the old church window, sometime like the shauen Hercules in the smircht worm-eaten tapestry, where his cod-peece seemes as massie as his club.

Con. Al this I see, and I see that the fashion weares out more apparell then the man, but art not thou thy selfe giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Bor. Not so neither, but know that I haue to night wooed Margaret the Lady Heroes gentle-woman, by the name of Hero, she leanes me out at her mistris chamber window, bids me a thousand times good night: I tell this tale vildly. I should first tel thee how the prince Claudio and my master planted, and placed, and possessed, by my master Don Iohn, saw a farre off

off in the orchard this amiable incounter.

Conr. And thought they Margaret was Hero?

Bar. Two of them did, the prince and Claudio, but the diuel my master knew she was Margaret, and partly by his oths, which first possest them, partly by the darke night which did deceiue them, but chiefely, by my villany, which did confirme any slander that Don Iohn had made, away went Claudio enraged, swore he would meet her as he was apointed next morning at the Temple, and there, before the whole congregation shame her, with what he saw o're night, and send her home againe without a husband.

Watch 1 We charge you in the princes name stand.

Watch 2 Call vppe the right master Constable, wee haue here recouerd the most dangerous peece of lechery, that euer was knowne in the common wealth.

Watch 1 And one Deformed is one of them, I know him, a weares a locke.

Conr Masters, masters.

Watch 2 Youle be made bring deformed forth I warrant you.

Conr Masters, neuer speake, we charge you, let vs obey you to go with vs.

Bor. We are like to proue a goodly commoditie, being taken vp of these mens billes.

Conr. A commodity in question I warrant you, come weele obey you. *exeunt.*

Enter Hero, and Margaret, and Vrsula.

Hero Good Vrsula wake my cosin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

Vrsula I wil lady.

Hero And bid her come hither.

Vrsula Well.

Marg. Troth I thinke your other rebato were better.

Hero No pray thee good Meg, ile weare this.

Marg. By my troth's not so good, and I warrant your cosin will say so.

Hero My cosin's a foole, and thou art another, ile weare

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none but this.

Mar I like the new tire within excelently, if the haire were a thought browner: and your gown's a most rare fashion yfaith, I saw the Dutchesse of Millaines gowne that they praise so.

Hero O that exceedes they say.

Marg. By my troth's but a night-gown in respect of yours, cloth a gold and cuts, and lac'd with siluer, set with pearles, downe sleeues, side sleeues, and skirts, round vnderborne with a blewish tinsell, but for a fine, queint, graceful and excelent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

Hero God giue me ioy to weare it, for my heart is exceeding heauy.

Marg. T'will be heauier soone by the weight of a man.

Hero Fie vpon thee, art not asham'd?

Marg. Of what lady? of speaking honourably? is not marriage honourable in a beggar? is not your Lord honourable without marriage? I thinke you would haue me say, sauing your reuerence a husband: & bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, ile offend no body, is there any harm in the heauier, for a husband? none I thinke, and it be the right husband, and the right wife, otherwise tis light and not heauy, aske my lady Beatrice els, here she comes.

Enter Beatrice.

Hero. Good morrow coze.

Beat. Good morrow sweete Hero.

Hero Why how now? do you speake in the sicke tune?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, me thinkes.

Mar Clap's into Light a loue, (that goes without a burden,) do you sing it, and ile daunce it.

Beat. Ye Light aloue with your heels, then if your husband haue stables enough youle see he shall lacke no barnes.

Mar. O illegitimate construction! I scorne that with my heeles.

Beat. Tis almost fiue a clocke coson, tis time you were ready, by my troth I am exceeding ill, hey ho.

Mar. For a hauke, a horse, or a husband?

Beat.

Beat. For the letter that begins them al, H.

Mar. Wel, and you be not turnde Turke, there's no more sayling by the starre.

Beat. What means the foole trow?

Mar. Nothing I, but God send euery one their hearts desire.

Hero These gloues the Counte sent me, they are an excellent perfume.

Beat. I am stuft coson, I cannot smell.

Mar. A maide and stuft! there's goodly catching of colde.

Beat. O God help me, God help me, how long haue you profest apprehension?

Mar. Euer since you left it, doth not my wit become me rarely?

Beat. It is not seene enough, you should weare it in your cap, by my troth I am sicke.

Mar. Get you some of this distill'd *carduus benedictus*, and lay it to your heart, it is the onely thing for a qualme.

Hero There thou prickst her with a thistel.

Beat. Benedictus, why *benedictus*? you haue some moral in this *benedictus*.

Mar. Morall? no by my troth I haue no morall meaning, I meant plaine holy thistel, you may thinke perchaunce that I think you are in loue, nay birlady I am not such a foole to think what I list, nor I list not to thinke what I can, nor indeed I can not think, if I would thinke my heart out of thinking, that you are in loue, or that you will be in loue, or that you can be in loue: yet Benedicke was such another, and now is he become a man, he swore he would neuer marry, and yet now in dispight of his heart he eates his meate without grudging, and how you may be conuerted I know not, but me thinkes you looke with your eies as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keepes?

Marg. Not a false gallop. *Enter Vrsula.*

Vrsula Madame withdraw, the prince, the Count, signior Benedicke, Don Iohn, and all the gallants of the towne are

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come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dresse me good coze, good Meg, good Vrsula.

Enter Leonato, and the Constable, and the Headborough.

Leonato What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Const. Dog. Mary sir I would haue some confidence with you, that decernes you nearely.

Leonato Briefe I pray you, for you see it is a busie time with me.

Const. Dog. Mary this it is sir.

Headb. Yes in truth it is sir.

Leonato What is it my good friends?

Con. Do. Goodman Verges sir speaks a little of the matter, an old man sir, and his wittes are not so blunt, as God helpe I would desire they were, but infaith honest, as the skin between his browes.

Head. Yes I thank God, I am as honest as any man liuing, that is an old man, and no honester then I.

Const. Dog. Comparisons are odorous, palabras, neighbour Verges.

Leonato Neighbors, you are tedious.

Const. Dog. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poore Dukes officers, but truly for mine owne part, if I were as tedious as a King I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

Leonato All thy tediousnesse on me, ah?

Const. Dog. Yea, and 't twere a thousand pound more than tis, for I heare as good exclamation on your worshippe as of any man in the citie, and though I be but a poore man, I am glad to heare it.

Head. And so am I.

Leonato I would faine know what you haue to say.

Head. Mary sir our watch to night, excepting your worships presence, ha tane a couple of as arrant knaues as any in Messina.

Const. Dog. A good old man sir, he will be talking as they say, when the age is in, the wit is out, God help vs, it is a world to

to see: well said yfaith neighbour Verges, well, God's a good man, and two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind, an honest soule yfaith sir, by my troth he is, as euer broke bread, but God is to be worshipt, all men are not alike, alas good neighbour.

Leonato Indeed neighbour he comes too short of you.

Const. Do. Gifts that God giues.

Leonato I must leaue you.

Const. Dog. One word sir, our watch sir haue indeede comprehended two aspitious persons, and wee woulde haue them this morning examined before your worship.

Leonato Take their examination your selfe, and bring it me, I am now in great haste, as it may appeare vnto you.

Constable It shall be suffigance. (*exit*

Leonato Drinke some wine ere you goe: fare you well.

Messenger My lord, they stay for you, to giue your daughter to her husband.

Leon. Ile wait vpon them, I am ready.

Dogb. Go good partner, goe get you to Francis Sea-cole, bid him bring his penne and inckehorne to the Gaole: we are now to examination these men.

Verges And we must do it wisely.

Dogbery We will spare for no witte I warrant you: heeres that shall driue some of them to a noncome, only get the learned writer to set downe our excommunication, and meet me at the Iaile.

Enter Prince, Bastard, Leonato, Frier, Claudio, Benedicke, Hero, and Beatrice.

Leonato Come Frier Francis be briefe, onely to the plaine forme of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Fran. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady.

Claudio No.

Leo. To bee married to her: Frier, you come to marry her.

Frier Lady, you come hither to be married to this counte.

Hero I do.

Frier If either of you know any inward impediment why

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you should not be conioyned, I charge you on your soules to vtter it.

Claudio Know you any, Hero?

Hero None my lord.

Frier Know you any, Counte?

Leonato I dare make his answer, None.

Clau. O what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do, not knowing what they do!

Bene. Howe nowe! interiections? why then, some be of laughing, as, ah, ha, he.

Claudio Stand thee by Frier, father by your leaue,
Will you with free and vnconstrained soule
Giue me this maide your daughter?

Leonata As freely sonne as God did giue her mee.

Claudio And what haue I to giue you backe whose woorth
May counterpoise this rich and pretious gift?

Prince Nothing, vnlesse you render her againe.

Claudio Sweete Prince, you learne me noble thankfulnes:
There Leonato, take her backe againe,
Giue not this rotten orenge to your friend,
Shee's but the signe and semblance of her honor:
Behold how like a maide she blushes heere!
O what authoritie and shew of truth
Can cunning sinne couer it selfe withall!
Comes not that blood, as modest euidence,
To witnesse simple Vertue? would you not sweare
All you that see her, that she were a maide,
By these exterior shewes? But she is none:
She knowes the heate of a luxurious bed:
Her blush is guiltinesse, not modestie.

Leonato What do you meane, my lord?

Claudio Not to be married,
Not to knit my soule to an approoued wanton.

Leonato Deere my lord, if you in your owne proofe,
Haue vanquisht the resistance of her youth,
And made defeate of her virginitie.

Claudio I know what you would say: if I haue knowne her,
You

You will say, she did imbrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the forehand sinne: No Leonato,
I neuer tempted her with word too large,
But as a brother to his sister, shewed
Bashfull sinceritie, and comelie loue.

Hero And seemde I euer otherwise to you?

Claudio Out on thee seeming, I wil write against it,
You seeme to me as Diane in her Orbe,
As chaste as is the budde ere it be blowne:
But you are more intemperate in your blood,
Than Venus, or those pampred animalls,
That rage in sauage sensualitie.

Hero Is my Lord well that he doth speake so wide?

Leonato Sweete prince, why speake not you?

Prince What should I speake?
I stand dishonourd that haue gone about,
To lincke my deare friend to a common stale.

Leonato Are these things spoken, or do I but dreame?

Bastard Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

Bened. This lookes not like a nuptiall.

Hero True, O God!

Claud. Leonato, stand I here?
Is this the prince? is this the princes brother?
Is this face Heroes? are our eies our owne?

Leonato All this is so, but what of this my Lord?

Claud. Let me but moue one question to your daughter,
And by that fatherly and kindly power,
That you haue in her, bid her answer truly.

Leonato I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

Hero O God defend me how am I beset,
What kind of catechising call you this?

Claud. To make you answer truly to your name.

Hero Is it not Hero, who can blot that name
With any iust reproch?

Claud. Mary that can Hero,
Hero it selfe can blot out Heroes vertue.
What man was he talkt with you yesternight,
Out at your window betwixt twelue and one?

Now

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Now if you are a maide, answer to this.
Hero I talkt with no man at that hower my lord.
Prince Why then are you no maiden. Leonato,
I am sory you must heare: vpon mine honor,
My selfe, my brother, and this grieued Counte
Did see her, heare her, at that howre last night,
Talke with a ruffian at her chamber window,
Who hath indeede most like a liberall villaine,
Confest the vile encounters they haue had
A thousand times in secret.
Iohn Fie, fie, they are not to be named my lord,
Not to be spoke of,
There is not chastitie enough in language,
Without offence to vtter them: thus pretty lady,
I am sory for thy much misgouernement.
Claud. O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou bin,
If halfe thy outward graces had bin placed,
About thy thoughts and counsailes of thy heart?
But fare thee well, most foule, most faire, farewell
Thou pure impietie, and impious puritie,
For thee ile locke vp all the gates of Loue.
And on my eie-liddes shall Coniecture hang,
To turne all beautie into thoughts of harme,
And neuer shall it more be gracious.
Leonato Hath no mans dagger here a point for me.
Beatrice Why how now cosin, wherfore sinke you down?
Bastard Come let vs go: these things come thus to light,
Smother her spirits vp.
Benedicke How doth the Lady?
Beatrice Dead I thinke, help vncle,
Hero, why Hero, vncle, signior Benedicke, Frier.
Leonato O Fate! take not away thy heauy hand,
Death is the fairest couer for her shame
That may be wisht for.
Beatrice How now cosin Hero?
Frier Haue comfort lady.
Leonato Dost thou looke vp?

Frier

Frier Yea, wherefore should she not?
Leonato Wherfore? why doth not euery earthly thing,
Cry shame vpon her? could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?
Do not liue Hero, do not ope thine eies:
For did I thinke thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirites were stronger than thy shames,
My selfe would on the rereward of reproches
Strike at thy life. Grieued I I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugall Natures frame?
O one too much by thee: why had I one?
Why euer wast thou louely in my eies?
Why had I not with charitable hand,
Tooke vp a beggars issue at my gates,
Who smirched thus, and mired with infamy,
I might haue said, no part of it is mine,
This shame deriues it selfe from vnknowne loynes,
But mine and mine I loued, and mine I praisde,
And mine that I was prowd on mine so much,
That I my selfe, was to my selfe not mine:
Valewing of her, why she, O she is falne,
Into a pit of incke, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her cleane againe,
And salt too little, which may season giue
To her foule tainted flesh.
Ben. Sir, sir, be patient, for my part I am so attired in wonder, I know not what to say.
Beat. O on my soule my cosin is belied.
Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?
Beat. No truly, not although vntill last night,
I haue this twelue month bin her bedfellow.
Leon. Confirmd, confirmd, O that is stronger made,
Which was before bard vp with ribs of yron,
Would the two princes lie, and Claudio lie,
Who loued her so, that speaking of her foulenesse,
Washt it with teares hence from her, let her die.
Frier Heare me a little, for I haue only bin silent so long, & giuen way vnto this course of fortune, by noting of the lady, I haue markt,

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A thousand blushing apparitions,
To start into her face,a thousand innocent shames,
In angel whitenesse beate away those blushes,
And in her eie there hath appeard a fire,
To burne the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth:call me a foole,
Trust not my reading,nor my obseruations,
Which with experimental seale doth warrant
The tenure of my booke:trust not my age,
My reuerence,calling,nor diuinitie,
If this sweete ladie lie not guiltlesse here,
Vnder some biting errour.
Leonato Frier,it cannot be,
Thou seest that al the grace that she hath left,
Is,that she will not adde to her damnation,
A sinne of periury,she not denies it:
Why seekst thou then to couer with excuse,
That which appeares in proper nakednesse?
Frier Lady,what man is he you are accusde of?
Hero They know that do accuse me, I know none,
If I know more of any man aliue
Then that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sinnes lacke mercie,O my father,
Proue you that any man with me conuerst,
At houres vnmeete,or that I yesternight
Maintaind the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me,hate me,torture me to death.
Frier There is some strange misprision in the princes.
Bene. Two of them haue the very bent of honour,
And if their wisedomes be misled in this,
The practise of it liues in Iohn the Bastard,
Whose spirites toyle in frame of villanies.
Leonato I know not,if they speake but truth of her,
These hands shall teare her, if they wrong her honour,
The prowdest of them shal wel heare of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this bloud of mine,
Nor age so eate vp my inuention,

Nor Fortune made such hauocke of my meanes,
Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
But they shall find awakte in such a kind,
Both strength of limbe,and policy of mind,
Ability in meanes,and choise of friends,
To quit me of them throughly.
Frier Pawse awhile,
And let my counsell sway you in this case,
Your daughter here the princesse (left for dead,)
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it,that she is dead indeede,
Maintaine a mourning ostentation,
And on your families old monument,
Hang mourneful epitaphes,and do all rites,
That appertaine vnto a buriall.
Leon. What shall become of this?what will this do?
Frier Mary this well caried, shall on her behalfe,,
Change slaunder to remorse,that is some good,
But not for that dreame I on this strange course,
Put on this trauaile looke for greater birth:
She dying,as it must be so maintaind,
Vpon the instant that she was accusde,
Shal be lamented,pitied,and excusde
Of euery hearer:for it so falls out.
That what we haue,we prize not to the worth,
Whiles we enioy it,but being lackt and lost,
Why then we racke the valew,then we find
The vertue that possession would not shew vs
Whiles it was ours,so will it fare with Claudio:
When hee shall heare she died vpon his words,
Th Idæa of her life shall sweetly creepe,
Into his study of imagination,
And euery louely Organ of her life,
Shall come apparelld in more precious habite,
More mooning delicate,and full of life,
Into the eie and prospect of his soule
Then when she liude indeed:then shall he mourne,

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If euer loue had intereſt in his liuer,
And wiſh he had not ſo accuſed her:
No, though he thought his accuſation true:
Let this be ſo, and doubt not but ſucceſſe
Will faſhion the euent in better ſhape,
Then I can lay it downe in likelihood.
But if all ayme but this be leuelld falſe,
The ſuppoſition of the ladies death,
Will quench the wonder of her infamie.
And if it ſort not wel, you may conceale her,
As beſt befits her wounded reputation,
In ſome recluſiue and religious life,
Out of all eies, tongues, minds, and iniuries.

Bene. Signior Leonato, let the Frier aduiſe you,
And though you know my inwardneſſe and loue
Is very much vnto the prince and Claudio,
Yet, by mine honor, I will deale in this,
As ſecretly and iuſtly as your ſoule
Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in griefe,
The ſmalleſt twine may leade me.

Frier Tis wel conſented, preſently away,
For to ſtrange ſores, ſtrangely they ſtraine the cure,
Come lady die to liue, this wedding day
Perhaps is but prolong'd, haue patience and endure. *exit.*

Bene. Lady Beatrice, haue you wept al this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not deſire that.

Beat. You haue no reaſon, I do it freely.

Bene. Surely I do beleeue your faire coſin is wronged.

Beat. Ah, how much might the man deſerue of me that would right her!

Bene. Is there any way to ſhew ſuch friendſhip?

Beat. A very euen way, but no ſuch friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a mans office, but not yours.

Bene. I doe loue nothing in the worlde ſo well as you,

is not that ſtrange?

Beat. As ſtrange as the thing I knowe not, it were as poſſible for me to ſay, I loued nothing ſo wel as you, but beleue me not, and yet I lie not, I confeſſe nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am ſory for my coſin.

Bened. By my ſword Beatrice, thou loueſt me.

Beat. Do not ſweare and eate it.

Bened. I will ſweare by it that you loue me, and I wil make him eate it that ſayes I loue not you.

Beat. Will you not eate your word?

Bened. With no ſawce that can be deuiſed to it, I proteſt I loue thee.

Beat. Why then God forgiue me.

Bened. What offence ſweete Beatrice?

Beat. You haue ſtayed me in a happy houre, I was about to proteſt I loued you.

Bened. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I loue you with ſo much of my heart, that none is left to proteſt.

Bened. Come bid me doe any thing for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bened. Ha, not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny it, farewell.

Bened. Tarry ſweete Beatrice.

Beat. I am gone, though I am here, there is no loue in you, nay I pray you let me go.

Bened. Beatrice.

Beat. In faith I will go.

Bened. We'le be friends firſt.

Beat. You dare eaſier be friends with mee, than fight with mine enemy.

Bened. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is a not approoued in the height a villaine, that hath ſlandered, ſcorned, diſhonored my kinſwoman? O that I were a man! what, beare her in hand, vntill they come to take handes, and then with publike accuſation vncouerd ſlaunder, vnmittigated rancour? O God that I were a man! I woulde

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eate his heart in the market place.

Bened. Heare me Beatrice.

Beat. Talke with a man out at a window, a proper saying.

Bened. Nay but Beatrice.

Beat. Sweete Hero, she is wronged, she is slaundred, shee is vndone.

Bened. Beat?

Beat. Princes and Counties! surely a princely testimonie, a goodly Counte, Counte Comfect, a sweete Gallant surely, O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend woulde be a man for my sake! But manhoode is melted into curtsies, valour into complement, and men are only turnd into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tels a lie, and sweares it: I cannot be a man with wishing, therfore I will die a woman with grieuing.

Bened. Tarry good Beatrice, by this hand I loue thee.

Beatrice Vse it for my loue some other way than swearing by it.

Bened. Thinke you in your soule the Count Claudio hath wrongd Hero?

Beatrice Yea, as sure as I haue a thought, or a soule.

Bened. Enough, I am engagde, I will challenge him, I will kisse your hand, and so I leaue you: by this hand, Claudio shal render me a deere account: as you heare of me, so think of me: goe comforte your cosin, I must say she is dead, and so farewell.

Enter the Constables, Borachio, and the Towne clearke in gownes.

Keeper Is our whole dissembly appeard?

Cowley O a stoole and a cushion for the Sexton.

Sexton Which be the malefactors?

Andrew Mary that am I, and my partner.

Cowley Nay thats certaine, we haue the exhibition to examine.

Sexton But which are the offenders? that are to be examined, let them come before maister constable.

Kemp Yea mary, let them come before mee, what is your name, friend?

Bor. Borachio.

Ke. Pray write downe Borachio. Yours sirra.

Con. I am a gentleman sir, and my name is Conrade.

Ke. Write downe maister gentleman Conrade: maisters, do you serue God?

Both Yea sir we hope.

Kem. Write downe, that they hope they serue God: and write God first, for God defend but God shoulde goe before such villaines: maisters, it is prooued already that you are little better than false knaues, and it will go neere to be thought so shortly, how answer you for your selues?

Con. Mary sir we say, we are none.

Kemp A maruellous witty fellowe I assure you, but I will go about with him: come you hither sirra, a word in your eare sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaues.

Bor. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

Kemp Well, stand aside, fore God they are both in a tale: haue you writ downe, that they are none?

Sexton Master constable, you go not the way to examine, you must call foorth the watch that are their accusers.

Kemp Yea mary, thats the eftest way, let the watch come forth: masters, I charge you in the Princes name accuse these men.

Watch 1 This man said sir, that don Iohn the Princes brother was a villaine.

Kemp Write downe, prince Iohn a villaine: why this is flat periurie, to call a Princes brother villaine.

Borachio Maister Constable.

Kemp Pray thee fellowe peace, I doe not like thy looke I promise thee.

Sexton What heard you him say else?

Watch 2 Mary that he had receiued a thousand duckats of don Iohn, for accusing the Ladie Hero wrongfully.

Kemp Flat burglarie as euer was committed.

Const. Yea by masse that it is.

Sexton What else fellow?

Watch

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Watch 1 And that Counte Claudio did meane vppon his wordes, to disgrace Hero before the whole assemblie, and not marrie her.

Kemp O villaine! thou wilt be condemnd into euerlasting redemption for this.

Sexton VVhat else? *Watch* This is all.

Sexton And this is more masters then you can deny, prince Iohn is this morning secretlie stolne awaie : Hero was in this manner accusde, in this verie manner refusde, and vppon the griefe of this, sodainlie died : Maister Constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonatoes, I will goe before and shew him their examination.

Constable Come, let them be opiniond.

Couley Let them be in the hands of Coxcombe.

Kemp Gods my life, wheres the Sexton? let him write down the Princes officer Coxcombe: come, bind them, thou naughty varlet.

Couley Away, you are an asse, you are an asse.

Kemp Doost thou not suspect my place ? doost thou not suspect my yeeres? O that he were here to write me downe an asse! but maisters, remember that I am an asse, though it bee not written downe, yet forget not that I am an asse : No thou villaine, thou art full of pietie as shal be prou'de vpon thee by good witnes, I am a wise fellow, and which is more, an officer, and which is more, a housholder, and which is more, as pretty a peece of flesh as anie is in Messina, and one that knowes the Law, goe to, and a rich fellow enough, go to, and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gownes, and euery thing handsome about him : bring him away: O that I had bin writ downe an asse! *exit.*

Enter Leonato and his brother.

Brother If you go on thus, you will kill your selfe,
And tis not wisedome thus to second griefe,
Against your selfe.

Leonato I pray thee cease thy counsaile,
Which falles into mine eares as profitlesse,
As water in a syue: giue not me counsaile,

Nor

Nor let no comforter delight mine eare,
But such a one whose wrongs doe suite with mine.
Bring me a father that so lou'd his child,
Whose ioy of her is ouer-whelmd like mine,
And bid him speake of patience,
Measure his woe the length and bredth of mine,
And let it answer euery straine for straine,
As thus for thus, and such a griefe for such,
In euery lineament, branch, shape, and forme:
If such a one will smile and stroke his beard,
And sorrow, wagge, crie hem, when he should grone,
Patch griefe with prouerbes, make misfortune drunke,
With candle-wasters: bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience:
But there is no such man, for brother, men
Can counsaile, and speake comfort to that griefe,
Which they themselues not feele, but tasting it,
Their counsaile turnes to passion, which before,
Would giue preceptiall medcine to rage,
Fetter strong madnesse in a silken thred,
Charme ach with ayre, and agony with words,
No, no, tis all mens office, to speake patience
To those that wring vnder the loade of sorrow
But no mans vertue nor sufficiencie
To be so morall, when he shall endure
The like himselfe: therefore giue me no counsaile,
My griefes crie lowder then aduertisement.

Brother Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leonato I pray thee peace, I wil be flesh and bloud,
For there was neuer yet Philosopher,
That could endure the tooth-ake patiently,
How euer they haue writ the stile of gods,
And made a push at chance and sufferance.

Brother Yet bend not all the harme vpon your selfe,
Make those that do offend you, suffer too.

Leonato There thou speakst reason, nay I will do so,
My soule doth tell me, Hero is belied,

H And

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And that shall Claudio know, so shall the prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Prince and Claudio.

Brother Here comes the Prince and Claudio hastily.
Prince Good den, good den.
Claudio Good day to both of you.
Leonato Heare you my Lords?
Prince We haue some haste Leonato.
Leonato Some haste my lord! well, fare you well my lord,
Are you so hasty now? wel, all is one.
Prince Nay do not quarrel with vs, good old man.
Brother If he could right himselfe with quarrelling,
Some of vs would lie low.
Claudio Who wrongs him?
Leona. Mary thou dost wrong me, thou dissembler, thou:
Nay, neuer lay thy hand vpon thy sword,
I feare thee not.
Claudio Mary beshrew my hand,
If it should giue your age such cause of feare,
In faith my hand meant nothing to my sword.
Leonato Tush, tush man, neuer fleere and iest at me,
I speake not like a dotard, nor a foole,
As vnder priuiledge of age to bragge,
What I haue done being yong, or what would doe,
Were I not old, know Claudio to thy head,
Thou hast so wrongd mine innocent child and me,
That I am forst to lay my reuerence by,
And with grey haires and bruise of many daies,
Do challenge thee to triall of a man,
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child.
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors:
O in a toomb where neuer scandal slept,
Saue this of hers, framde by thy villanie.
Claudio My villany?
Leonato Thine Claudio, thine I say.
Prince You say not right old man.

Leonato My Lord, my Lord,
Ile proue it on his body if he dare,
Dispight his nice fence, and his actiue practise,
His Maie of youth, and bloome of lustihood.
Claudio Away, I will not haue to doe with you.
Leonato Canst thou so daffe me? thou hast kild my child,
If thou kilst me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.
Brother He shal kill two of vs, and men indeed,
But thats no matter, let him kill one first:
Win me and weare me, let him answer me,
Come follow me boy, come sir boy, come follow me
Sir boy, ile whip you from your foyning fence,
Nay, as I am a gentleman I, will.
Leonato Brother.
Brother Content your self, God knowes, I loued my neece,
And she is dead, slanderd to death by villaines,
That dare as well answer a man indeed,
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue,
Boyes, apes, braggarts, Iackes, milke-sops.
Leonato Brother Anthony.
Brother Hold you content, what man! I know them, yea
And what they weigh, euen to the vtmost scruple,
Scambling, out-facing, fashion-monging boies,
That lie, and cogge, and flout, deprave, and slaunder,
Go antiquely, and shew outward hidiousnesse,
And speake of halfe a dozen dang'rous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst,
And this is all.
Leonato But brother Anthonie.
Brother Come tis no matter,
Do not you meddle, let me deale in this.
Prince Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience,
My heart is sory for your daughters death:
But on my honour she was chargde with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proofe.
Leonato My Lord, my Lord.
Prince I will not heare you.

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Leo. No come brother,away, I wil be heard. *Exeunt amb.*
Bro. And shal, or some of vs wil smart for it. *Enter Ben.*
Prince See see,heere comes the man we went to seeke.
Claud. Now signior,what newes?
Bened. Good day my Lord:
Prince Welcome signior, you are almost come to parte almost a fray.
Claud. Wee had likt to haue had our two noses snapt off with two old men without teeth.
Prince Leonato and his brother what thinkst thou? had we fought,I doubt we should haue beene too yong for them.
Bened. In a false quarrell there is no true valour, I came to seeke you both.
Claud. We haue beene vp and downe to seeke thee,for we are high proofe melancholie, and would faine haue it beaten away, wilt thou vse thy wit?
Bened. It is in my scabberd, shal I drawe it?
Prince Doest thou weare thy wit by thy side?
Claud. Neuer any did so,though very many haue been beside their wit, I will bid thee drawe,as wee doe the minstrels, draw to pleasure vs.
Prince As I am an honest man he lookes pale, art thou sicke,or angry?
Claud. What,courage man: what though care kild a catte, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.
Bened. Sir, I shall meete your wit in the careere, and you charge it against me, I pray you chuse another subiect
Claud. Nay then giue him another staffe,this last was broke crosse.
Prince By this light,he chaunges more and more, I thinke he be angry indeed.
Claud. If he be,he knowes how to turne his girdle.
Bened. Shall I speake a word in your eare?
Claud. God blesse me from a challenge.
Bened. You are a villaine, I ieast not, I will make it good howe you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare: doe mee right,or I will protest your cowardise: you haue kild a sweete

sweete Lady, and her death shall fall heauie on you, let me heare from you.
Claud. Well I wil meet you,so I may haue good cheare.
Prince What,a feast, a feast?
Claud. I faith I thanke him he hath bid me to a calues head & a capon,the which if I doe not carue most curiously,say my kniffe's naught, shall I not find a woodcocke too?
Bened. Sir your wit ambles well, it goes easily.
Prince Ile tell thee how Beatrice praisd thy witte the other day: I said thou hadst a fine witte, true said she,a fine little one: no said I,a great wit: right saies she, a great grosse one: nay said I, a good wit, iust said she,it hurts no body: nay said I, the gentleman is wise: certaine said she, a wise gentleman: nay said I, he hath the tongues: that I beleeue said shee, for he swore a thing to mee on munday night,which hee forswore on tuesday morning, theres a double tongue theirs two tongues, thus did shee an houre together transshape thy particular vertues,yet at last she cõcluded with a sigh,thou wast the properst man in Italy.
Claud. For the which shee wept heartily and saide she cared not.
Prince Yea that she did, but yet for all that, and if she did not hate him deadly, she would loue him dearely, the old mans daughter told vs all.
Claud. All all, and moreouer,God sawe him when he was hid in the garden.
Prince But when shall we set the sauage bulles hornes one the sensible Benedicks head?
Clau. Yea and text vnder-neath, here dwells Benedick the married man.
Bened. Fare you wel, boy,you know my minde, I wil leaue you now to your gossep-like humor,you breake iests as braggards do their blades, which God be thanked hurt not: my Lord,for your many courtisies I thanke you, I must discontinue your company,your brother the bastard is fled from Messina: you haue among you, kild a sweet and innocent lady: for my Lord Lacke-beard, there hee and I shal meet,and till then peace be with him.

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Prince He is in earneſt.

Claudio In moſt profound earneſt, and ile warrant you, for the loue of Beatrice.

Prince And hath challengde thee.

Claudio Moſt ſincerely.

Prince What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his dublet and hoſe, and leaues off his wit!

Enter Conſtables, Conrade, and Borachio.

Claudio He is then a Giant to an Ape, but then is an Ape a Doctor to ſuch a man.

Prince But ſoft you, let me be, plucke vp my heart, and be ſad, did he not ſay my brother was fled?

Conſt. Come you ſir, if iuſtice cannot tame you, ſhe ſhall nere weigh more reaſons in her ballance, nay, and you be a curſing hypocrite once, you muſt be lookt to.

Prince How now, two of my brothers men bound? Borachio one.

Claudio Hearken after their offence my Lord.

Prince Officers, what offence haue theſe men done?

Conſt. Mary ſir, they haue committed falſe report, moreouer they haue ſpoken vntruths, ſecondarily they are ſlanders, ſixt and laſtly, they haue belyed a Lady, thirdly they haue verefied vniuſt thinges, and to conclude, they are lying knaues.

Prince. Firſt I aske thee what they haue done, thirdly I ask thee whats their offence, ſixt and laſtly why they are committed, and to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

Claud. Rightly reaſoned, and in his owne diuiſion, and by my troth theres one meaning wel ſuted.

Prince Who haue you offended maiſters, that you are thus bound to your anſwere? this learned Conſtable is too cunning to be vnderſtood, whats your offence?

Bor. Sweete prince, let me goe no farther to mine anſwere: do you heare me, and let this Counte kill me: I haue deceiued euen your very eyes: what your wiſedoms could not diſcouer, theſe ſhallowe fooles haue broght to light, who in the night ouerheard me confeſſing to this man, how Don Iohn your brother incenſed me to ſlaunder the Lady Hero, howe you were brought

brought into the orchard, and ſaw me court Margaret in Heroes garments, how you diſgracde hir when you ſhould marry hir: my villany they haue vpon record, which I had rather ſeale with my death, then repeate ouer to my ſhame: the lady is dead vpon mine and my maſters falſe accuſation: and briefely, I deſire nothing but the reward of a villaine.

Prince Runnes not this ſpeech like yron through your bloud?

Claud. I haue dronke poiſon whiles he vtterd it.

Prince But did my brother ſet thee on to this?

Bor. Yea, and paid me richly for the practiſe of it.

Prince He is compoſde and framde of treacherie,
And fled he is vpon this villanie.

Clau. Sweet Hero, now thy image doth appeare
In the rare ſemblance that I lou'd it firſt.

Conſt. Come, bring away the plaintiffes, by this time our ſexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter: and maſters, do not forget to ſpecifie when time and place ſhal ſerue, that I am an aſſe.

Con.2 Here, here comes maſter Signior Leonato, and the ſexton too.

Enter Leonato, his brother, and the Sexton.

Leonato Which is the villaine? let me ſee his eies,
That when I note another man like him,
I may auoide him: which of theſe is he?

Bor. If you would know your wronger, looke on me.

Leonato Art thou the ſlaue that with thy breath haſt killd
Mine innocent child?

Bor. Yea, euen I alone.

Leo. No, not ſo villaine, thou belieſt thy ſelfe,
Here ſtand a paire of honourable men,
A third is fled that had a hand in it:
I thanke you Princes for my daughters death,
Record it with your high and worthy deeds,
Twas brauely done, if you bethinke you of it.

Clau. I know not how to pray your pacience,
Yet I muſt ſpeake, chooſe your reuenge your ſelfe,

Impoſe

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Impose me to what penance your inuention
Can lay vpon my sinne, yet sinnd I not,
But in mistaking.

Prince By my soule nor I,
And yet to satisfie this good old man,
I would bend vnder any heauy waight,
That heele enioyne me to.

Leonato I cannot bid you bid my daughter liue,
That were impossible, but I pray you both,
Possesse the people in Messina here,
How innocent she died, and if your loue
Can labour aught in sad inuention,
Hang her an epitaph vpon her toomb,
And sing it to her bones, sing it to night:
To morrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my son in law,
Be yet my nephew: my brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copie of my child thats dead,
And she alone is heyre to both of vs,
Giue her the right you should haue giu'n her cosin,
And so dies my reuenge.

Claudio O noble sir!
Your ouer kindnesse doth wring teares from me,
I do embrace your offer and dispose;
For henceforth of poore Claudio.

Leonato To morrow then I wil expect your comming,
To night I take my leaue, this naughty man
Shal face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who I beleeue was packt in al this wrong,
Hyred to it by your brother.

Bor. No by my soule she was not,
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,
But alwayes hath bin iust and vertuous,
In any thing that I do know by her.

Const. Moreouer sir, which indeede is not vnder white and blacke, this plaintiffe heere, the offendour, did call me asse, I beseech you let it be remembred in his punishment, and also the

the watch heard them talke of one Deformed, they say he weares a key in his eare and a locke hanging by it, and borows monie in Gods name, the which he hath vsde so long, & neuer paied, that now men grow hard hearted and wil lend nothing for Gods sake: praie you examine him vpon that point.

Leonato I thanke thee for thy care and honest paines.

Const. Your worship speakes like a most thankful and reuerent youth, and I praise God for you.

Leon. Theres for thy paines.

Const. God saue the foundation.

Leon. Goe, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thanke thee.

Const. I leaue an arrant knaue with your worship, which I beseech your worship to correct your selfe, for the example of others: God keepe your worship, I wish your worship well, God restore you to health, I humblie giue you leaue to depart and if a merie meeting may be wisht, God prohibite it: come neighbour.

Leon. Vntill to morrow morning, Lords, farewell.

Brot. Farewell my lords, we looke for you to morrow.

Prince We will not faile.

Claud. To night ile mourne with Hero.

Leonato Bring you these fellowes on, wee'l talke with Margaret, how her acquaintance grew with this lewd felow. *exeunt*

Enter Benedicke and Margaret.

Bened. Praie thee sweete mistris Margaret, deserue well at my hands, by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Mar. Wil you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beautie?

Bene. In so high a stile Margaret, that no man liuing shall come ouer it, for in most comely truth thou deseruest it.

Mar. To haue no man come ouer me, why shal I alwaies keep below staires.

Bene. Thy wit is as quicke as the grey-hounds mouth, it catches.

Mar. And your's, as blunt as the Fencers foiles, which hit, but hurt not.

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Bene. A moſt manly witte Margaret, it will not hurt a woman: and ſo I pray thee call Beatrice, I giue thee the bucklers.

Marg. Giue vs the ſwordes, wee haue bucklers of our owne.

Bene. If you vſe them Margaret, you muſt putte in the pikes with a vice, and they are daungerous weapons for maides.

Mar. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I thinke hath legges. *Exit Margarite.*

Bene. And therefore wil come. The God of loue that ſits aboue, and knowes mee, and knowes me, how pittifull I deſerue. I meane in ſinging, but in louing, Leander the good ſwimmer, Troilus the firſt imploier of pandars, and a whole booke full of theſe quondam carpet-mongers, whoſe names yet runne ſmoothly in the euen rode of a blancke verſe, why they were neuer ſo truly turnd ouer and ouer as my poore ſelfe in loue: mary I cannot ſhew it in rime, I haue tried, I can finde out no rime to Ladie but babie, an innocent rime: for ſcorne, horne, a hard rime: for ſchoole foole, a babling rime: very ominous endings, no, I was not borne vnder a riming plannet, nor I cannot wooe in feſtiuall termes: ſweete Beatrice wouldſt thou come when I cald thee?

Enter Beatrice.

Beat. Yea ſignior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O ſtay but till then.

Beat. Then, is ſpoken: fare you wel now, and yet ere I goe, let me goe with that I came, which is, with knowing what hath paſt betweene you and Claudio.

Bene. Onely foule words, and therevpon I will kiſſe thee.

Beat. Foule words is but foule wind, and foule wind is but foule breath, and foule breath is noiſome, therfore I wil depart vnkiſt.

Bene. Thou haſt frighted the word out of his right ſence, ſo forcible is thy wit, but I muſt tel thee plainly, Claudio vndergoes my challenge, and either I muſt ſhortly heare from him, or I will ſubſcribe him a coward, and I pray thee now tell me, for

for which of my bad parts didſt thou firſt fal in loue with me?

Beat. For them all together, which maintaind ſo politique a ſtate of euil, that they will not admitte any good part to intermingle with them: but for which of my good parts did you firſt ſuffer loue for me?

Bene. Suffer loue! a good epithite, I do ſuffer loue indeed, for I loue thee againſt my will.

Beat. In ſpight of your heart I thinke, alas poore heart, if you ſpight it for my ſake, I will ſpight it for yours, for I wil neuer loue that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wiſe to wooe peaceably.

Beat. It appeares not in this confeſſion, theres not one wiſe man among twentie that will praiſe himſelfe.

Bene. An old, an old inſtance Beatrice, that liu'd in the time of good neighbours, if a man do not erect in this age his owne toomb ere he dies, he ſhall liue no longer in monument, then the bell rings, and the widow weepes.

Beat. And how long is that thinke you?

Bene. Queſtion, why an hower in clamour and a quarter in rhewme, therefore is it moſt expedient for the wiſe, if Don worme (his conſcience) find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his owne vertues, as I am to my ſelf ſo much for praiſing my ſelfe, who I my ſelfe will beare witnes is praiſe worthie, and now tell me, how doth your coſin?

Beat. Verie ill.

Bene. And how do you?

Beat. Verie ill too.

Bene. Serue God, loue me, and mend, there wil I leaue you too, for here comes one in haſte. *Enter Vrſula.*

Vrſula Madam, you muſt come to your vncle, yonders old coile at home, it is prooued my Lady Hero hath bin falſely accuſde, the Prince and Claudio mightily abuſde, and Don Iohn is the author of all, who is fled and gone: will you come preſently?

Beat. Will you go heare this newes ſignior?

Bene. I will liue in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eies: and moreouer, I wil go with thee to thy vncles. *exit.*

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Enter Claudio, Prince, and three or foure with tapers.

Claudio Is this the monument of Leonato?

Lord It is my Lord. *Epitaph.*

Done to death by slauderous tongues,
Was the Hero that heere lies:
Death in guerdon of her wronges,
Giues her fame which neuer dies:
So the life that dyed with shame,
Liues in death with glorious fame.
Hang thou there vpon the toomb,
Praising hir when I am dead.

Claudio Now musick sound & sing your solemne hymne.

Song Pardon goddesse of the night,
Those that slew thy virgin knight,
For the which with songs of woe,
Round about her tombe they goe:
Midnight assist our mone, help vs to sigh & grone.
Heauily heauily.
Graues yawne and yeeld your dead,
Till death be vttered,
Heauily heauily. (right.

Lo. Now vnto thy bones good night, yeerely will I do this

Prince Good morrow maisters, put your torches out,
The wolues haue preied, and looke, the gentle day
Before the wheeles of Phœbus, round about
Dapples the drowsie East with spots of grey:
Thanks to you al, and leaue vs, fare you well.

Claudio Good morrow masters, each his seuerall way.

Prince Come let vs hence, and put on other weedes,
And then to Leonatoes we will goe.

Claudio And Hymen now with luckier issue speeds,
Then this for whom we rendred vp this woe. *exeunt.*

Enter Leonato, Benedick, Margaret Vrsula, old man, Frier, Hero.

Frier Did I not tell you shee was innocent?

Leo. So are the Prince and Claudio who accusd her,
Vpon the errour that you heard debated:
But Margaret was in some fault for this,
Although against her will as it appeares,

In the true course of all the question.

Old Wel, I am glad that all things sorts so well.

Bened. And so am I, being else by faith enforst
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

Leo. Well daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by your selues,
And when I send for you come hither masked:
The Prince and Claudio promisde by this howre
To visite me, you know your office brother,
You must be father to your brothers daughter,
And giue her to young Claudio. *Exeunt Ladies.*

Old Which I will doe with confirmd countenance.

Bened. Frier, I must intreate your paines, I thinke.

Frier To doe what Signior?

Bened. To bind me, or vndo me, one of them:
Signior Leonato, truth it is good Signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of fauour.

Leo. That eye my daughter lent her, tis most true.

Bened. And I do with an eye of loue requite her.

Leo. The sight whereof I thinke you had from me,
From Claudio and the Prince, but whats your will?

Bened. Your answere sir is enigmaticall,
But for my wil, my will is, your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conioynd,
In the state of honorable marriage,
In which (good Frier) I shal desire your help.

Leo. My heart is with your liking.

Frier And my helpe.
Heere comes the Prince and Claudio.

Enter Prince, and Claudio, and two or three other.

Prince Good morrow to this faire assembly.

Leo. Good morrow Prince, good morrow Claudio:
We heere attend you, are you yet determined,
To day to marry with my brothers daughter?

Claud. Ile hold my mind were she an Ethiope.

Leo Call her foorth brother, heres the Frier ready.

P. Good morrow Bened. why whats the matter?

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That you haue ſuch a Februarie face,
So full of froſt, of ſtorme, and clowdineſſe.
Claud. I thinke he thinkes vpon the ſauage bull:
Tuſh feare not man, weele tip thy hornes with gold,
And all Europa ſhall reioyce at thee,
As once Europa did at luſtie Ioue,
When he would play the noble beaſt in loue.
Bene. Bull Ioue ſir had an amiable lowe,
And ſome ſuch ſtrange bull leapt your fathers cowe,
And got a calfe in that ſame noble feate,
Much like to you, for you haue iuſt his bleate.
Enter brother, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, Vrſula.
Clau. For this I owe you: here comes other recknings.
Which is the Lady I muſt ſeize vpon?
Leo. This ſame is ſhe, and I do giue you her.
Claud. Why then ſhees mine, ſweet, let me ſee your face.
Leon. No that you ſhall not till you take her hand,
Before this Frier, and ſweare to marry hir.
Claud. Giue me your hand before this holy Frier,
I am your husband if you like of me.
Hero And when I liu'd I was your other wife;
And when you loued; you were my other husband.
Claud. Another Hero.
Hero Nothing certainer,
One Hero died defilde, but I do liue,
And ſurely as I liue, I am a maide.
Prince The former Hero, Hero that is dead.
Leon. She died my Lord, but whiles her ſlaunder liu'd.
Frier All this amazement can I qualifie,
When after that the holy rites are ended,
Ile tell you largely of faire Heroes death,
Meane time let wonder ſeeme familiar,
And to the chappell let vs preſently.
Ben. Soft and faire Frier, which is Beatrice?
Beat. I anſwer to that name, what is your will?
Bene. Do not you loue me?
Beat. Why no, no more then reaſon.

Bene.

about Nothing.

Bene. Why then your uncle, and the prince and Claudio,
Have beene deceiued, they swore you did.
Beat. Do not you loue me?
Bene. Troth no, no more then reason.
Beat. Why then my cosin Margaret and Vrsula
are much deceiu'd, for they did sweare you did.
Bene. They swore that you were almost sicke for me.
Beat. They swore that you were welnigh dead for me.
Bene. Tis no such matter, then you do not loue me.
Beat. No truely, but in friendly recompence.
Leon. Come cosin, I am sure you loue the gentleman.
Clau. And Ile beswome vpon't that he loues her.
For heres a paper written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his owne pure braine,
Fashioned to Beatrice.
Hero. And heres another,
writ in my cosins hand, stolne from her pocket,
containing her affection vnto Benedicke.
Bene. A miracle, heres our owne hands against our heasts:
come, I will have thee, but by this light I take thee for pittie.
Beat. I would not denie you, but by this good day, I yeeld
vpon great persuasion, and partly to saue your life, for I was
told you were in a consumption.
Leon. Peace I will stop your mouth.
Prince. How dost thou Benedicke the married man?
Bene. Ile tell thee what prince: a colledge of witte-crackers
cannot flout me out of my humour, dost thou think I care for
a Satyre or an Epigramme? no, if a man will be beaten with
braines, a shall weare nothing hansome about him: in briefe,
since I doe purpose to marrie, I will think nothing to anie pur-
pose that the world can saie against it, and therefore never flout
at me, for what I have said against it: for man is a giddie thing,
and this is my conclusion: for thy part Claudio, I did think
to have beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my kinsman,
live unbruiside, and loue my cousen.
Clau. I had wel hopte thou wouldst have denied Beatrice,
that I might have cudgelld thee out of thy single life, to make
thee

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thee a double dealer: which out of question thou wilt be, if my cosin do not looke exceeding narrowly to thee.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends, lets have a dance ere we are maried, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wiues heeles.

Leon. Wee'le haue dancing afterwards.

Bene. First, of my worde, therefore plaie musicke, Prince, thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife, there is no staffe more reuerent then one tipt with horne.

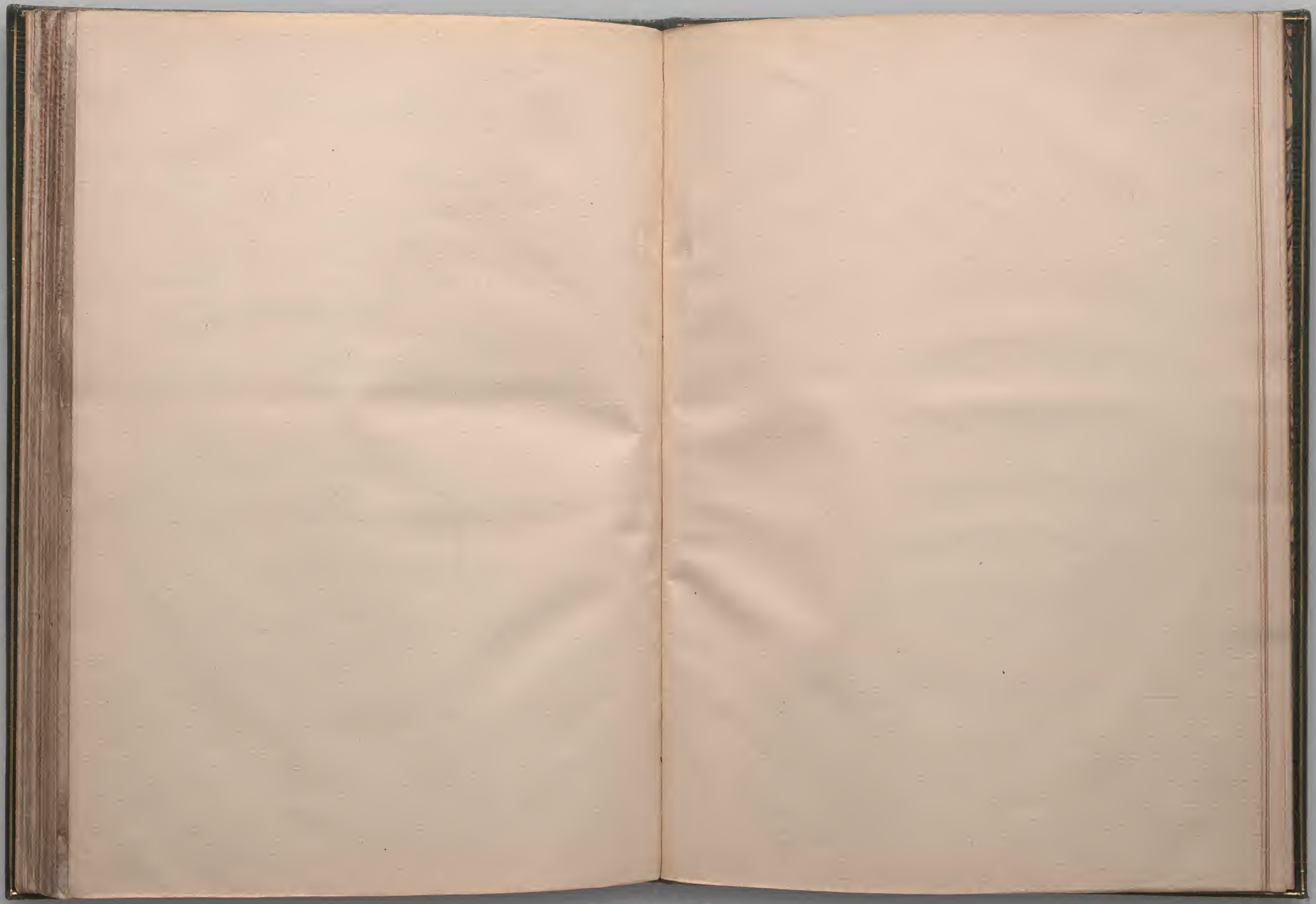
Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My Lord, your brother Iohn is taine in flight, and brought with armed men backe to Messina.

Bene. Thinke not on him till to morrow, ile deuise thee braue punishments for him: strike vp Pipers. dance.

FINIS.

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM



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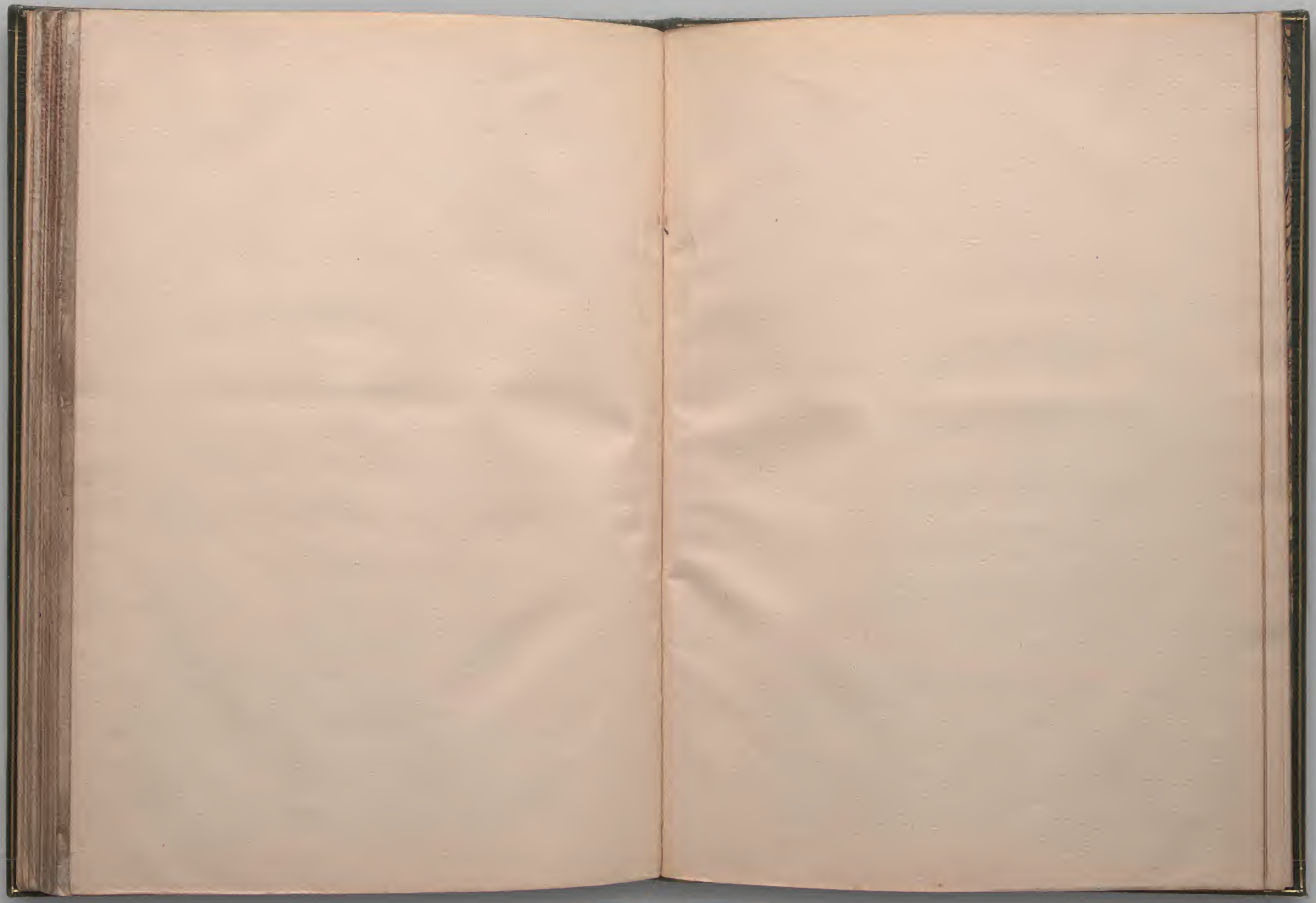

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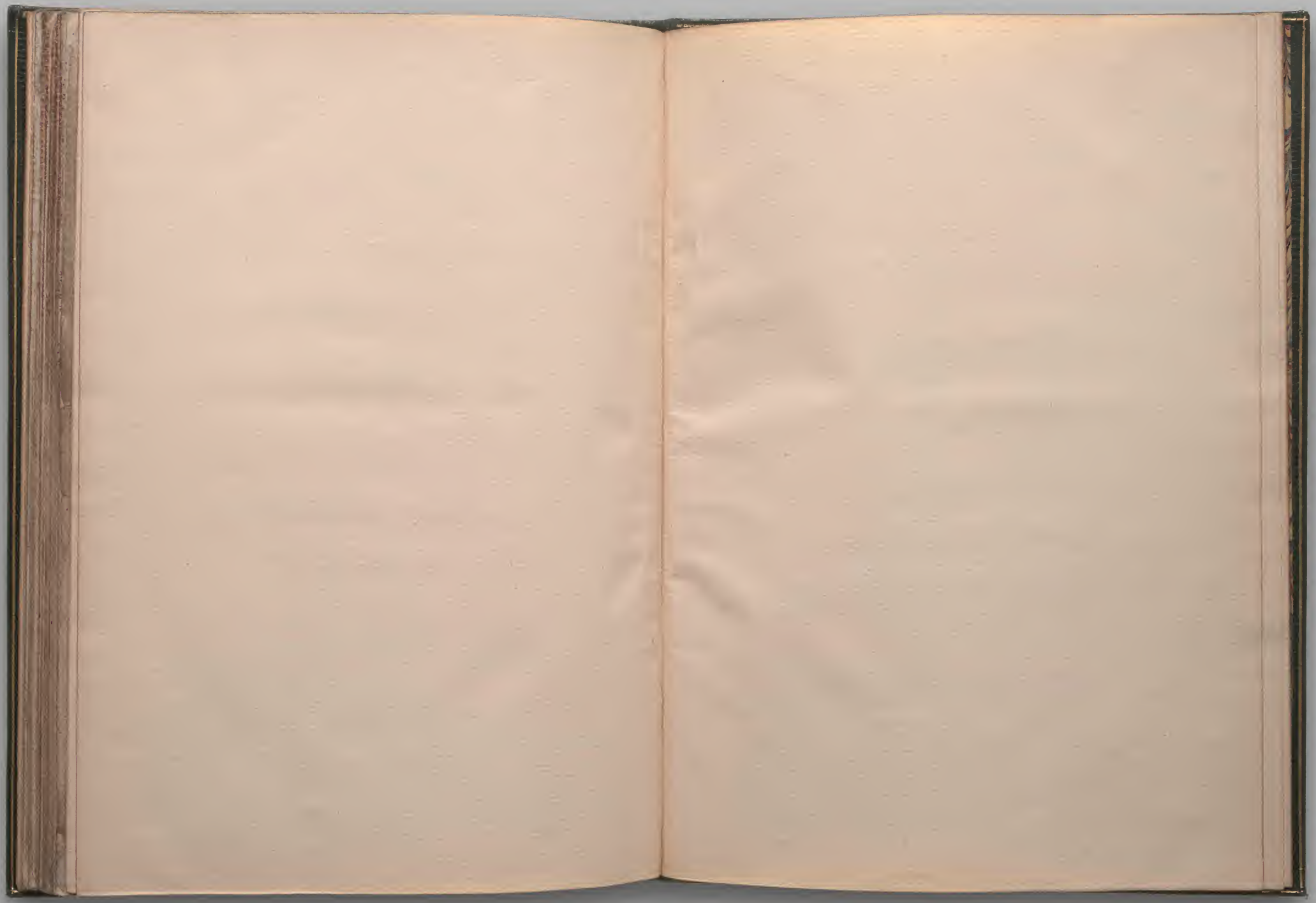

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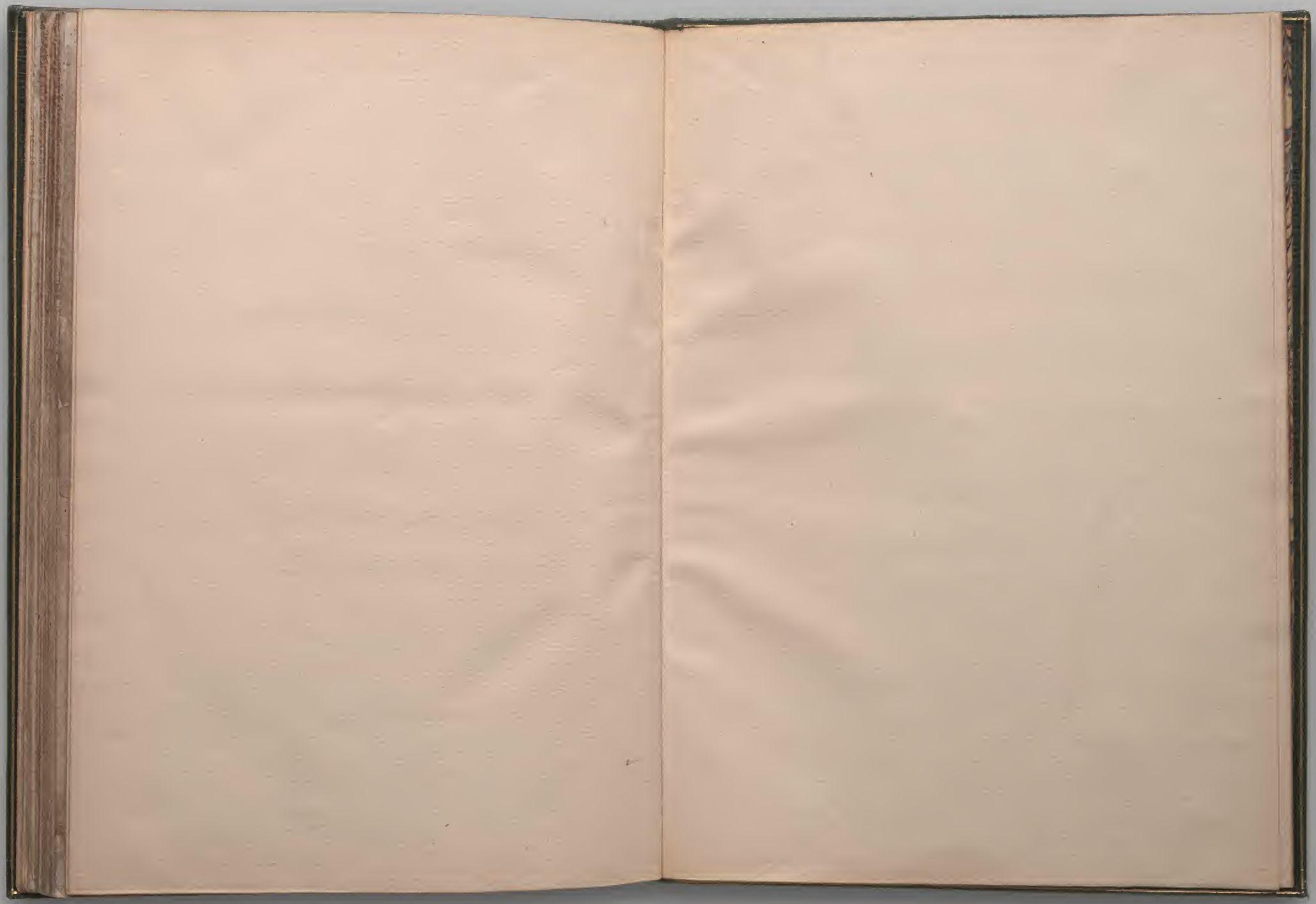

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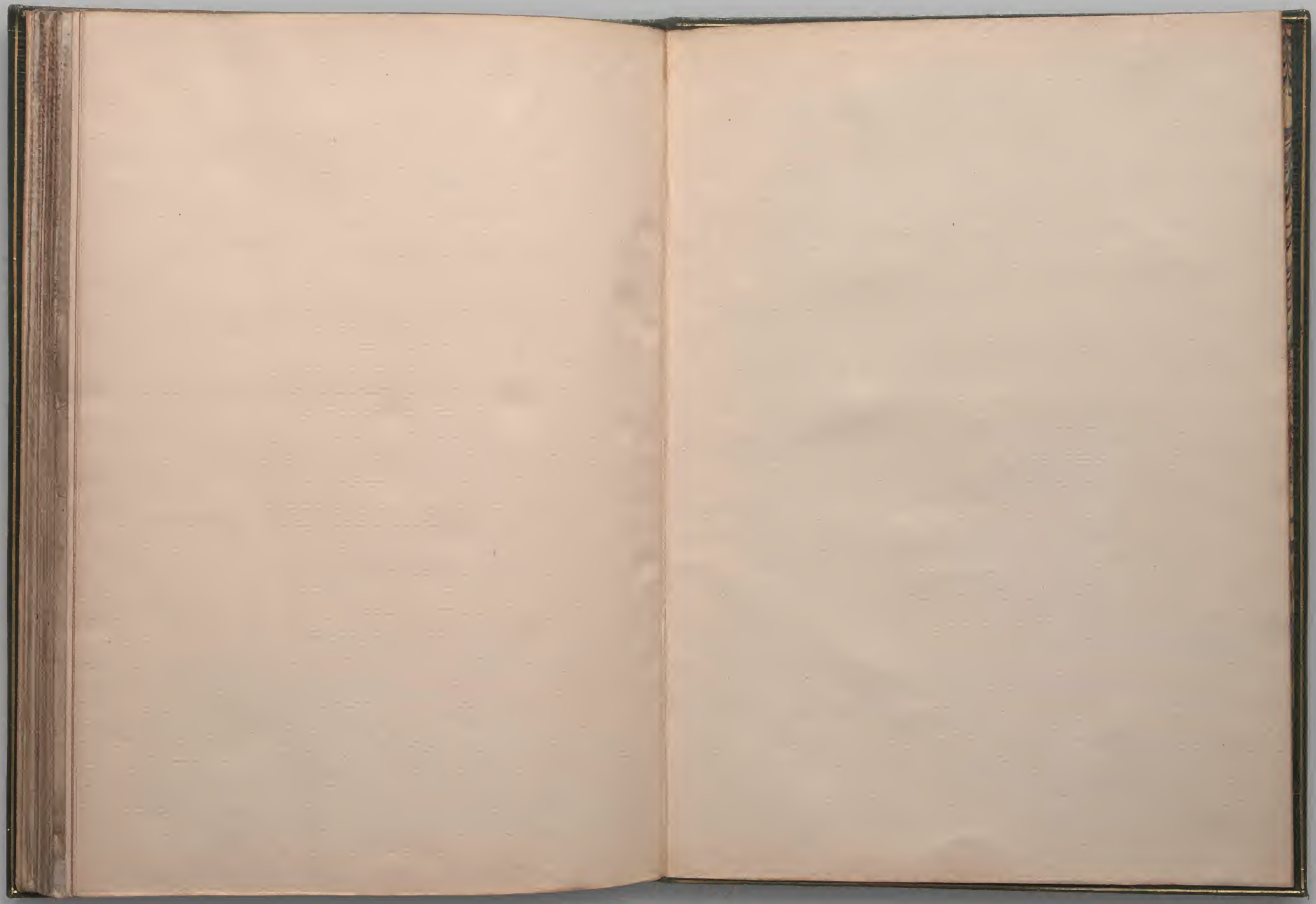

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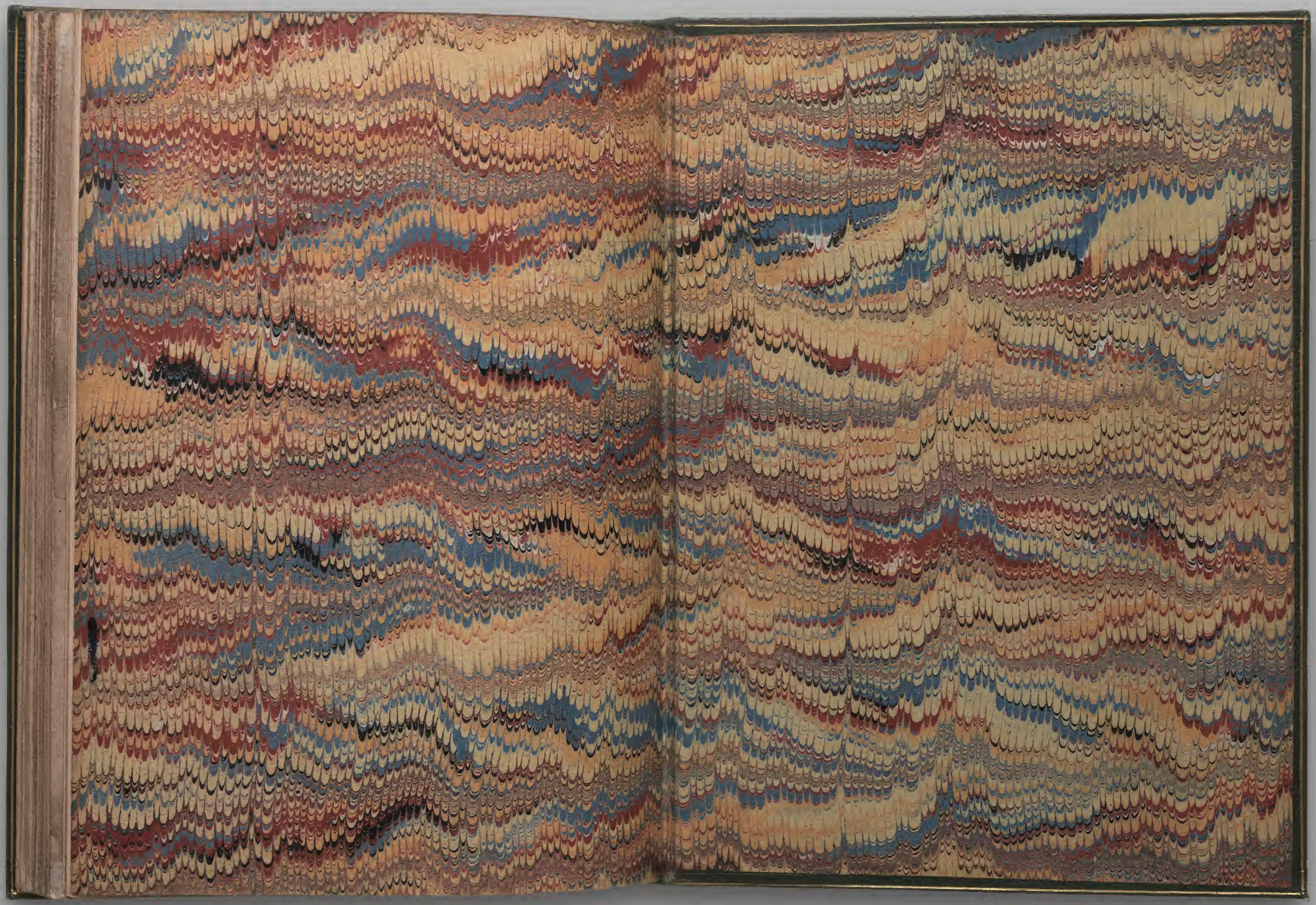

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